

DO YOU KNOW GREEK?

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# DO YOU KNOW GREEK?

HOW MUCH GREEK COULD THE FIRST  
JEWISH CHRISTIANS HAVE KNOWN?

BY

J. N. SEVENSTER

Professor of New Testament Exegesis and  
Ancient Christian Literature  
in the University of Amsterdam



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June 1968

J. N. SEVENSTER

## ABBREVIATIONS

|         |                                                                             |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BASOR   | Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research                       |
| BGU     | Berliner griechische Urkunden                                               |
| CIJ     | Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum                                             |
| CPJ     | Corpus Papyrorum Iudaicarum                                                 |
| IEJ     | Israel Exploration Journal                                                  |
| JBL     | Journal of Biblical Literature                                              |
| JEOL    | Jaarbericht „Ex Oriente Lux”                                                |
| JQR     | Jewish Quarterly Review                                                     |
| NTS     | New Testament Studies                                                       |
| RB      | Revue Biblique                                                              |
| RGG     | Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart                                    |
| Str. B. | H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch  |
| ThLZ    | Theologische Literatur-Zeitung                                              |
| ThW     | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum N.T.                                           |
| ZDPV    | Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins                                 |
| ZNW     | Zeitschrift für die n.t.liche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums |

## INTRODUCTION

The first Christians in Palestine were practically without exception Jews. Therefore the answer to the question as to how much Greek they knew must be based mainly on an investigation into the knowledge of Greek among the Palestinian Jews about the beginning of the Christian era. Considerable attention has been devoted to this question in recent years. It might even be said that "the thorny problem of the relationship between the Greek and the Hebrew languages among the Jews of Palestine and neighbouring countries"<sup>1</sup> has formed the focus of attention in various books and articles, sometimes in the wider context of the study of Hellenistic influence on Jewish thought and life in the centuries immediately prior to and after the beginning of our calendar.<sup>2</sup>

Although an investigation into the knowledge of Greek among the first Christians in Palestine will therefore coincide for the most part with the study of the knowledge of that language among the Jews in that period, it will also require an exegesis of certain data in the writings of the New Testament. What language did those first Christians speak and write? Did they know only one language, or were they bilingual? Were only a few of them acquainted with Greek? Was this the language of trade and communication or was it exclusive to the higher, more cultured circles? Was Aramaic the only language spoken in the villages, in the country, in the lower circles? Could it be said with certainty that a person who came from the countryside of Galilee could not have been able to speak Greek? Did the contact which the first Christians of Palestine soon made with fellow believers abroad or, for example, in Jerusalem with Jews from the diaspora, result automatically in an increase in their knowledge of Greek or in a special use of the possibilities for doing so in their intercourse with those who had a complete command of this language?

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. B. Lifshitz, *Beiträge zur Palästinischen Epigraphik*, in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 1962, p. 75; French and German citations are translated in the text, but not in the notes.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942; id., *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 21962; Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 1961; Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, 1960; M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 1959.

Only seldom are these questions referred to explicitly in the New Testament, but it would certainly be well worth while to investigate whether any implicit, chance indications of this nature could be found. Moreover there are probably various reasons why the study of the New Testament in particular should give rise to a special interest in these questions. One is inherent in the fact that all the books of the New Testament were written in Greek, and hence the decision about the possibility whether one given person could have written one or more of them is determined in part by the amount of knowledge of Greek he can be presumed to have had. It is well known that such decisions, particularly with respect to certain epistles, repeatedly form the subject of discussions and that the outcome still is variable. Could the apostle Peter have written the first Epistle of Peter? When answering this question, all sorts of arguments for and against must, of course, be considered, and sometimes they seem to point so conclusively in one direction or the other that the question of his knowledge of Greek is not the decisive factor. But if they appear to be in balance, then the answer to this question could tip the scales in one direction or the other. And even if it does not do so, it is still a weighty matter. In one of the most recent "Introductions to the New Testament", the decisive arguments against the ascription of I Pt. to Peter are stated to be: (1) I Pt. presumes the theology of Paul; (2) the letter contains "no reference whatsoever to acquaintance with Jesus on earth, his life, teaching and death"; (3) "The persecution suffered by the addressees can only be interpreted as an incipient persecution by the state. According to the traditions observed by the Old Church, however, the first persecution of Christians of more than local importance took place under Domitian". The above three arguments, however, are mentioned after the first, and perhaps therefore most important argument in the author's view: "The language of I Pt. is a polished Greek containing numerous rhetorical figures of speech. And the numerous citations and allusions are taken without exception from the LXX. These two facts are irreconcilable with the Galilean Peter".<sup>1</sup> In another recently published "Introduction", a list of arguments against ends with: "The very fluent Greek of this writing and the continuous use of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Feine-Johannes Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 12. völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage von Dr. Werner Georg Kümmel, 1963, pp. 308 et seq.

the LXX are further reasons for excluding the authorship of Peter".<sup>1</sup>

Now the whole aspect of this problem changes completely if we assume that the contents could, on the whole, derive from Peter, without also ascribing to him the Greek form of the epistle. Many of those who assume that Peter was the writer of the epistle believe someone else helped him, especially with the formulation of the Greek. Support for this assertion is to be found in a statement contained in the epistle itself: Διὰ Σιλουανοῦ ὑμῖν τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα (I Pt. 5:12). Often the interpretation given to this is that Silvanus helped as a sort of secretary in composing the epistle. Now it is well enough known that writings were sometimes dictated in ancient days, but if this explanation of I Pt. 5:12 is to account for the comparatively good Greek of I Pt., Silvanus' share in the composition of the epistle must naturally have been more than just taking down dictation. In that case the problem of the knowledge which the simple Galilean Peter had of this good Greek style would still be as it was. That is why a further assumption is often formulated: Peter is assumed to have given certain more or less detailed instructions, which Silvanus followed when composing the epistle. This same line of argument is also often used to explain the Pauline terms and concepts which occur in the epistle. They are said to derive from Silvanus or Silas, Paul's companion on his journeys. The question is, however, if it is admissible to put this construction on the διὰ Σιλουανοῦ. Sometimes in such a context, the διὰ definitely designates the bearer of the epistle, for example in the epistles of Ignatius.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, if the reference is merely to the bearer of the epistle, the addition of τοῦ πιστοῦ ἀδελφοῦ, ὡς λογίζομαι, seems entirely plausible to me. It would be perfectly natural for the author to introduce the bearer of the letter to congregations in which he was unknown as a person who, in his opinion, was completely trustworthy.

In any case the interpretation of I Pt. 5:12 is not certain enough to serve as basis for the answer to the question about the origin of the Greek of the epistle. Often the work of a secretary has been presumed in an epistle which contains not one single reference to such, the Epistle of James. In no other epistle is the problem of the author's knowledge of Greek such an important factor in the discussion on the questions of Introduction as in this one, and in no

<sup>1</sup> Willi Marxsen, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1963, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Philad. 11:2; Smyrn. 12:1; Rom. 10:1; cf. Acts 15:22.

other is so manifest the importance of gaining as lucid a picture as possible of the measure of Greek which certain groups of the Palestine population may be presumed to have known in those days. If it is established that a very polished Greek is used in the Epistle of James and that a "terminology of the cultivated Koine" can be discerned in his vocabulary, must the conclusion then be that "the civilised language of the Epistle is not that of a Palestinian"?<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, for the study and the exegesis of the Epistle of James, the identity of the *Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ δοῦλος*, who writes *ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ* (1:1) is of great importance. It is a known fact that there is no consensus of opinion as regards the answer to this question. G. Kittel argues emphatically that James, the Lord's brother, is the author of the epistle and that it was written in an early period, before the meeting of Paul and James in Gal. 2:1-10.<sup>2</sup> K. Aland opposed this article.<sup>3</sup> He strongly rejects the early dating and considers it impossible that James, the brother of the Lord, wrote the epistle. But he gives no indication as to who really did write it and in which period. In any case he believes that it was not written before the second century. It is understandable enough that Aland believes there is not much more to be said about when it came into being. If the author is not the James who is known from the New Testament or the history of the church, then nothing definite can be said about the dating of the epistle. All that is left over as *terminus ante quem* is the moment it is clearly cited. Little wonder that at precisely this point Aland quotes Jülicher, who says somewhere in his Introduction that the introductory science offers "the reliable mainly in the negative".

These polemics are only an example of the divergence of opinion on this problem that has long prevailed and continues to prevail. As for the present: Kümmel's edition of the Introduction of Feine-Behm practically amounts to a refutation as far as the treatment of the Epistle of James is concerned, and indeed of various other writings from the New Testament. Feine-Behm emphatically supports the authorship of James, the Lord's brother, although he freely admits the difficulties that arise because of the good Greek of the Epistle

<sup>1</sup> Feine-Behm-Kümmel, pp. 298. 300.

<sup>2</sup> G. Kittel *Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes*, in ZNW 41 (1942), pp. 71-105.

<sup>3</sup> K. Aland. *Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und der Jakobusbrief*, Theol. Literaturzeitung, Mai/Juni 1944, 69 Jhrg. pp. 97-104.



of James and the use of the LXX. But he believes that James had the assistance of a secretary "for drawing up a Greek epistle to brethren abroad".<sup>1</sup> Kümmel completely rejects the possibility that James, the Lord's brother, wrote the epistle and, as for the good Greek, considers the hypothesis "that the linguistic form of the Epistle of James derives from a Hellenistic Jew called in to help" absolutely impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Even before the publication of his article on the Epistle of James, Kittel had pointed out that if one abandons "the construction of a linguistic isolation" among the early Christians there is likewise no further reason to doubt "that from the circles of the early Palestinian congregation Greek writings were also despatched on occasion". In a footnote he evidently applies this to the Epistle of James: "also the customary opinion on the Epistle of James loses one of its essential supports because of this consideration".<sup>3</sup> This would, indeed, be of some importance, for the conflict of arguments for and against the authorship of James the brother of the Lord is still being waged, and often it is precisely the language argument which is considered very weighty. And since no single argument for or against has so far been completely decisive, each weakening or strengthening of one of them can influence the final judgment. That is even more applicable if there is said to be more against than in support of the authorship of the Lord's brother at present.

Briefly the main arguments for and against are as follows. For the authorship are often advanced these arguments:

(1) the introductory words mark the author as an important person in any case. Now of the James's mentioned in the New Testament only two could have been that: James, the son of Zebedee and James the brother of the Lord. The former was put to death in 44 by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12), hence it could be none other than James the brother of the Lord. The obvious argument raised against this is that the importance of the various James's cannot simply be gauged from what is said of them in the New Testament, and that it is quite possible that later, even much later, there was another James who occupied an important position in the first

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Feine-Johannes Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1936, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Feine-Behm-Kümmel, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> G. Kittel, *Die Probleme des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum*, 1926, p. 38.

Christian communities. Moreover, if he was the author, are not all sorts of things missing which one would in that case naturally expect to find, and are not many parts of the epistle formulated otherwise than would be expected of this James?

(2) Often great weight has been ascribed to the analogy between the Epistle of James and the words of Jesus: "There is no other book of the N.T. apart from the Gospels which is so larded with echoes of the Lord's utterances as this one".<sup>1</sup> Kittel has drawn up the most complete list of these analogies, 26 altogether. Naturally not all of these analogies are of equal significance. And in his refutation of this argument, Aland understandably falls back on Kittel's own statement: "none of these examples is in itself in any way decisive. Many of them are even, when taken in themselves, quite minor details, which no one would take into consideration if they occurred individually".<sup>2</sup> Moreover allowance must be made for the possibility that the epistle quotes from the gospels. Aland considers this quite feasible, for example on the grounds of the analogy between James 5:17 and Luke 4:25, where mention is made of the period "three years and six months".<sup>3</sup> The words of Jesus are similarly quoted on several occasions in the Apostolic Fathers.

(3) The eschatological statements of the Epistle of James reflect the expectations of the very earliest period of Christendom. As yet the exhortative reference to the end has nothing apologetic or speculative about it. It is an expectation which as yet does not rely on a broad apocalyptic portrayal of the future, but refers concretely and vitally to the immediate, practical situation. On the other hand it is pointed out that something similar can also be said of the eschatology of various Apostolic Fathers, with the exception of the Pastor Hermae. The question is whether, after all, James' tone and interest on this point do not differ from those of the Apostolic Fathers.<sup>4</sup>

The above are the main arguments put forward in favour of the authorship of James, the Lord's brother. It is sometimes added that the social situation presumed in the epistle accords best with the period in which this James lived.

<sup>1</sup> G. Kittel, ZNW 1942, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Aland, ThLZ 1944, pp. 99 et seq, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Kittel discusses this point at length in his article: Die eschatologischen Aussagen der Apostolischen Väter, verglichen mit denen des Jakobusbriefes, ZNW 1950-51, pp. 68 et seq.

If these arguments do not prove to be completely convincing, then the objections raised to this authorship are perhaps all the more persuasive. Here an important factor is the place of the Epistle of James in the history of the Church, in particular in the history of the Canon. The first irrefutably clear references to the epistle are to be found in the writings of Origen, and it was only after his time that the epistle came into general use. It is more frequently cited from the third century onwards. No clear indications of familiarity with the Epistle of James are to be found in the Apostolic Fathers, even though opinions differ on the Pastor Hermae. There is not a single phrase to be found in the writings of the Apologists of the second century or in Irenaeus which can definitely be said to derive from James.

It may thus be said that the Epistle of James was probably not used in the Eastern Church before Origen, and that it only penetrated to the West to any great extent in the fourth century, and even later to the Syrian Church. It is known that Eusebius still classified it and Jude, II Peter, II and III John as antilegomena and elsewhere writes: It should be known that he is not considered to be genuine.<sup>1</sup> Is such a late recording of the Epistle of James in the Canon compatible with the authorship of James, the Lord's brother? However this may be, this is not an unimportant question. It is remarkable that in his article on "Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes" of 1942, Kittel pays not the slightest attention to it, does not even mention the question of the position of the Epistle of James in the history of the Canon and that in his Introduction Feine-Behm does mention the facts briefly, but does not go any further into them in his discussion on the authorship of James, the Lord's brother. Later Kittel explains his earlier silence. He believes such objections to the early dating of the Epistle of James to be of only subsidiary significance, "namely as secondary in the sense that they may supplement judgments which have been independently formed, but they cannot refute them". According to Kittel, the use of this argument is almost always subjectivistic, sometimes apologetic and sometimes criticistic. Could this argument also be used as regards I Peter, whose position in the history of the Canon is relatively well established? That is indeed a legitimate question. Judging according to that criterion, the authenticity of I Peter would receive rather strong

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<sup>1</sup> Eus. H.E. III:25:3; II:23:25.

support. But even then Kittel would not admit the validity of that argument. He says that here methodological principles are at issue and that later he may explain them further. Unfortunately he did not do so.<sup>1</sup>

Other advocates of the authorship of James, the brother of the Lord, have considered this objection to be a really serious one and have endeavoured to explain this position of the Epistle of James in the history of the Canon. Michaelis does indeed consider it remarkable that in the West the canon Muratori, Tertullian and others are silent about the Epistle of James, that no mention is made of the epistle in Jewish-Christian literature, not even by Hegesippus, that the first mention of the epistle only occurs in Origen and, what is not so surprising in the circumstances, that the epistle only achieved canonical status with difficulty. Nevertheless Michaelis believes an explanation for this can be given: "firstly the unpretentious though authoritative way in which the writer expresses himself will certainly not have promoted the dissemination of his epistle beyond the circle of the original addressees. Furthermore the process of multiplication by copying of the Epistle of James should not be considered analogous to that of the Epistles of Paul and Peter, for example, as regards length and time required; hence the epistle will not have been well-known. This isolation, especially in the first century after its composition, must have formed an impediment to its inclusion in the formation of the Canon that was persistent and difficult to surmount".<sup>2</sup> This argumentation can hardly be termed completely convincing. "Unpretentious though authoritative"—the first qualification presumably refers to the Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, and the second to ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ. With these words the praescriptum can hardly be called unpretentious. In any case, if it had been known from the beginning that here the brother of the Lord was writing authoritatively to the twelve tribes in the diaspora—whatever the last term means exactly—it would certainly have promoted the dissemination of the epistle. Moreover, everything that is said here about James surely obtains for Jude as well, and even to a greater degree when the author calls himself Ἰούδας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος, ἀδελφὸς δὲ Ἰακώβου, considering the same is already mentioned in the canon Muratori: *Epistola sane Iudae et superscripti Iohannis duae in*

<sup>1</sup> G. Kittel, ZNW 1950-51, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> W. Michaelis, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 21954, pp. 281 et seq.

catholica habentur (68, 69). The same holds good if we ascribe to the contents the fact that the church found it so difficult to accept the Epistle of James and are of the opinion that: "The church had truly little need of admonitions in the earliest years. There were plenty of writings of such a nature".<sup>1</sup>

There is also another explanation which is likewise purely hypothetical and not particularly plausible: Jewish Christians brought the epistle to Rome and said that it was not from an apostle. Therefore, at a time when attention was mainly directed to apostolic origins, the epistle dropped into the background. And what made this all the more easy was that, because of its contents, it could not be used in the dogmatic and ecclesiastical conflict, and an epistle addressed to Jewish Christians could not fail to drop into the background in a period that was largely heathen-Christian. But men who had connexions in the East, such as Hieronymus in particular, ensured that in Rome the epistle was restored to high esteem.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to find much proof of such a course of events in the history of the Canon. Moreover, even if there were any element of truth in this line of thought, it would still be remarkable that no mention of the epistle is made in the Jewish Christian literature, which could so profitably have utilised it and which ascribes very great authority to the person of James. And so the explanation of the late appearance of the Epistle of James in the history of the Canon continues to be a problem, especially if it was known from the beginning to be a writing of James, the brother of the Lord.

Then, of course, the study of the weight of the other argument which is often raised against the authorship of James, the brother of the Lord, and which is sometimes claimed to be decisive is of even greater significance: this James could not possibly have written the good Greek of the epistle. Kümmel<sup>3</sup> is one of the many who consider this argument conclusive: "How could the carpenter's son from Nazareth have acquired such skill in the use of Greek as we find here?"<sup>4</sup> "Also the language of our text does not indicate an

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<sup>1</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, *Inleiding tot het Nieuwe Testament*, 1963, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Grosheide, *De brief aan de Hebreeën en de brief van Jakobus*, 1955, pp. 349 et seq.; cf. Th. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1900, I, pp. 92 et seq.; R. V. G. Tasker, *The General Epistle of James*, 1956, p. 19; C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle of James* 1966, p. 227 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 4, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Adolf Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1913, p. 190.

author who spends his life as a Jew in Palestine" <sup>1</sup> "The language and style belong to a stage of literary ability and culture that could hardly be expected from a countryman of Galilee".<sup>2</sup> Ropes phrases it in broader but no less emphatic terms: "Not only is the epistle written in a Greek style better than that of most writers of the N.T., but the writer shows a contact with Greek modes of public preaching and with Greek ideas and illustrations which would not be expected in a Galilean peasant whose experience of the world, even in the period of his broadest activity, came through his leadership of the Christians at Jerusalem". <sup>3</sup>

Now among those who ascribe the Epistle of James to the brother of the Lord are many who do not believe he is directly responsible for the Greek. They are of the opinion that James could have called on the assistance of a fluent Greek-speaking brother from the Jerusalem community, to which, for that matter, must have belonged many Hellenistic Jews who most likely had an excellent command of Greek. Kittel argues that a leader of communities that were partly located in the Diaspora naturally must have written in Greek, and he goes on to say: "It can of course remain an open question whether and to what degree James would have written such a letter in person and in his own writing or whether he had it written for instance by a Hellenistic Jewish Christian belonging to the first congregation, perhaps from the circle of Stephen, because such a man could handle the Greek language more effortlessly than the Palestinian who could understand and speak Greek, but used it only as a second language".<sup>4</sup> This hypothesis likewise is repeated again and again, often in remarkably similar terminology. Meinertz points out that in those days Palestine was no longer cut off from Hellenism and considers it sufficient to add: "If additionally it is assumed that he used the services of a Hellenistically educated assistant for the epistle which was sent beyond the borders of Palestine, then the last trace of difficulty would disappear".<sup>5</sup> Wikenhauser is quite certain that James could speak the Greek language, but he too offers no opinion as to whether

<sup>1</sup> M. Dibelius—W. Greeven, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, <sup>8</sup>1956, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. McNeile, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1927, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> James Hardy Ropes, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle of James*, 1916, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> G. Kittel, *ZNW* 1942, pp. 79 et seq.; cf. Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

<sup>5</sup> Max Meinertz, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, <sup>4</sup>1933, p. 284.

he alone wrote the epistle. "Moreover the question must of course remain open whether he could have composed a writing in such meticulous Greek, influenced by Greek rhetoric, without outside help. Since the ancients from time to time used a secretary for the composition of their letters, there are good grounds for assuming that James called in the assistance of one of the Hellenists trained in rhetoric who belonged to the earliest congregation, which also would explain the almost general use of the LXX".<sup>1</sup>

In support of this hypothesis, Kittel points out that in the New Testament secretaries evidently appear (Rom. 16:22 and I Peter 5:12). Indirect corroboration of this is also given by Paul in his repeated assurances that he wrote his epistle, or part of it, with his own hand.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Epistle of James, of course, a great deal depends on what exactly the secretary's work was. In Rom. 16:22 it is highly probable that the reference is only to the person who wrote down the epistle as dictated by Paul, and the allusions to the epistle being written by his own hand suggest in the first place that sometimes another person wrote down the epistle or part of it. Of course such secretarial work could not explain the good Greek of the Epistle of James: if the secretary's work merely consisted of taking down the dictation of James, the Lord's brother, then the Greek would still be the language of the latter. If one cannot conceive of James, the Lord's brother, having written such good Greek, then one must ascribe to such a Hellenistic Jewish Christian, for example from the circle of Stephen's followers, a much more influential activity and hence a much greater responsibility for the Greek of the epistle. Then, in the case of James, the activity of the secretary is not limited to taking down dictation; he is ascribed a much greater share in the creation of the epistle. Feine-Behm gives a sort of description of what he imagines the work of the secretary to have been, a secretary "for the production of a Greek epistle to foreign brethren": "if he instructed a Hellenist from his proximity to write down for a circle of compatriots and fellow-believers in the Diaspora admonitory words, just as he was wont to speak them to the congregation in Jerusalem or other congregations in Palestine, and to disseminate them after having added suitable opening words, then there might be created a work like that of the Epistle of James,

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Wikenhauser, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1953, pp. 346 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:8; II Thess. 3:17; Philem. 19.

in which the Hellenistic in form and expression, even to the Bible words in the Greek style familiar to the writer, blended with the Semitic mould of the thoughts of James and with the traces of the Palestinian milieu in which the brother of the Lord lived and worked".<sup>1</sup>

Feine-Behm believed, therefore, that James only gave a few general indications about the composition of the epistle and that a secretary worked out these suggestions more or less independently. In the first place it must be queried whether many clear examples can be found of such a relationship between employer and secretary. Roller's view is that it was quite customary in ancient days just to give the secretary certain indications if the letter was rather long and to leave him to work it out independently. He even endeavours to show that several of Paul's long epistles were written in this way.<sup>2</sup> Roller's work need not be termed "grossly dilletant" in order to emphasise clearly that his argumentation about Paul's epistles is not very convincing, that the passages quoted in all sorts of ancient writings as evidence of such secretarial work are, to say the least of it, very dubious and that one's opinion is "that also in other respects quite manifest errors, misinterpretations and wrong combinations slip into his work".<sup>3</sup> Naturally there will have been people who, for one reason or another, could not write their own letters at a certain moment and therefore gave a few instructions to a secretary who composed and wrote them, but there is no indication that this was customary. If there was no particular reason to do so, it probably seldom occurred. In my opinion, not one single irrefutably clear example of such is to be found in the New Testament. Tertius (Rom. 16:22) is definitely not one and Silvanus is, to say the least of it, doubtful. And moreover it is rather significant that in the Epistle of James there is no allusion, in any form whatsoever, to the activity of a secretary.

Secondly, even if the possibility of such secretarial assistance is admitted, it is extremely difficult to form a concrete picture of such occurring in the case of the Epistle of James. Feine-Behm assumes there was a Hellenist who repeatedly heard the admonitory words

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<sup>1</sup> Feine-Behm <sup>8</sup>1936, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> O. Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe*, 1933, pp. 18 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ernst Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe*, 1946, pp. 10 et seq.; W. Michaelis, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1946, p. 242-244; <sup>2</sup>1954, pp. 251 et seq.



James addressed to the congregation of Jerusalem and other congregations in Palestine and then wrote them down at the request of the Lord's brother for the benefit of a circle of fellow countrymen and believers in the Diaspora. The character of the Epistle of James makes this difficult to conceive; for one special feature of the epistle is precisely that it is composed largely of very short pericopes and that it is often not clear why they were placed in this particular sequence. They in no way give the impression of being originally spoken words which on certain occasions were addressed separately or in a context to an audience of fellow believers. It is difficult to believe that such words were repeated in exactly the same form, so that a secretary needed only a few indications.

Moreover, certain peculiarities of the Greek of the Epistle of James make it almost impossible to imagine how a secretary could have composed and written such an epistle at the indication of James. The assistance of such a secretary could explain the linking up with the text of the LXX, perhaps also the use of words which are often considered signs of the knowledge of a better Koine Greek, as for example *δελεάζομαι* (1:14), *ἀποκυέω* (1:15, 18), *τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος* (4:9). But how then can an explanation be found for the keywords, which are often considered so typical of the Epistle of James, which can be pointed out in several places with more or less certainty and which are very important in those places where scarcely any other coherence can be discerned: *χαίρειν-χαράν* (1:1, 2), *λειπόμενοι-λείπεται* (1:4, 5), *πειρασμόν-πειραζόμενος* (1:12, 13), *λόγον-λόγου* (1:21, 22)? From whom derive the various word-plays: *διεκρίθητε-κριταί* (2:4), *ἔργων-ἀργή* (2:20), *ἀδιάκριτος-ἀνυπόκριτος* (3:17), *φαινομένη-ἀφανιζόμενη* (4:14), from whom the alliterations, which of course occur only like this in Greek: *πειρασμοῖς περιπέσσητε ποικίλοις* (1:2), *μικρόν μέλος-μεγάλα* (3:5)?

If one considers this more cultivated Greek impossible in the mouth of James, the Lord's brother, one must then ascribe it to the Hellenistic member of the congregation on whom James called for assistance. But in that case how far did his instructions go? It is unlikely that he gave him all those often very short pericopes as subjects. And did the Hellenistic scholar of Greek arrange them in such a way that they were linked together by key-word combinations? Sometimes the word-plays and alliterations are also of great significance for the context of the short pericopes. Did James give him instructions on this point? It is very difficult to imagine all this,

unless James only provided him with a very few summary indications and for the rest left him completely at liberty to work them out himself. But then the epistle would practically be the work of the secretary.

Hence it is particularly difficult to attribute the character of the Greek of the Epistle of James to the cooperation between someone who was responsible for the contents but incapable of this Greek and a colleague who received instructions about the contents and then expressed them in this Greek form. Since the epistle contains not a single allusion to the work of a secretary, in any form whatsoever, I believe the hypothesis of the assistance of a secretary highly improbable.

If this hypothesis is refuted, two conclusions can be drawn: either the Greek of the Epistle of James could not possibly derive from James the brother of the Lord and someone else must have been the writer, or James the brother of the Lord must be considered to have known enough of the language to write the special Greek of this epistle. In the first case the obscurity of the writer provides the great degree of latitude needed to explain his knowledge of Greek. It could therefore have been a Hellenistic Christian, more probably a Hellenistic-Jewish Christian. For that matter a few semitisms can be discerned in addition to the good Greek. Some of them could derive from the semitising Greek of the LXX, for example ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ (1:8); ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ (1:11); ποιητῆς λόγου (1:22); πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως (1:23); πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν (2:1, 9); ποιεῖν ἔλεος (2:13); ποιητῆς νόμου (4:11). Others, however, probably derive from the writer himself, for example ἀκροατῆς ἐπιλησμονῆς (1:25); τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης (2:1); κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν (2:4); ἐν αὐτῇ twice, (3:9); προσευχῇ προσήύξατο (5:17).

The hypothesis of the authorship of a Hellenistic Jew is also fraught with difficulties. There is absolutely no indication of his identity. Nevertheless, according to the praescriptum he must have exercised authority in wide circles. Its phrasing is attributed to a desire to have the epistle issued under the auspices of a very well-known James in order to lend more authority to his words and to find immediate audience for it among a wide circle of readers. For these reasons he is supposed to have assumed the authority of the name of the Lord's brother. If that was intended, the writer would have done so more manifestly. Even in the praescriptum he does not

clearly indicate that he wishes to pose as the well-known leader of the community in Jerusalem. The simple way he refers to himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" seems very plausible coming from James, the brother of the Lord himself, but is scarcely acceptable as referring to this person if the precise intention was to use his name as a cover for these contents. If that were so, it would have been stated more clearly and explicitly, and there would have been allusions to this effect in the epistle itself. But they are nowhere to be found. Hence this hypothesis of the pseudonymity is unfeasible.

If, however, the author of the epistle wrote it under his own name, according to the praescriptum this Hellenistic-Jewish author must have been a man of authority, of whom absolutely nothing further is known, of whom all further trace has disappeared from the New Testament and the history of the church.<sup>1</sup> Naturally this is not impossible, but it could hardly be said that such a hypothesis is self-evident. On the contrary, a further reason for considering James the Lord's brother to be the writer could simply be that the alternative is not particularly likely.

And so we automatically come back once more to the consideration of the second possibility, that James the brother of the Lord knew enough Greek to be able to write the epistle himself. It has already appeared above <sup>2</sup> that some believe it absolutely impossible for a Palestine Jew, and certainly a simple man from Galilee, to have possessed such a knowledge of Greek as this epistle suggests. On the other hand, others find no objection to the authorship of James the brother of the Lord in the Greek of the Epistle. We have already mentioned Kittel's opinion that the study of the linguistic relationships in Palestine no longer warrant "the construction of a linguistic isolation" and that, for example, the Epistle

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<sup>1</sup> The way to diverse more or less hypothetical constructions then lies open. For example, Brandon locates the Epistle in Alexandria, on what I believe to be very dubious grounds, and considers it a testimonial of the initial period of Alexandrine Christendom from its Judaistic beginning, S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, 1957, pp. 237-239; id., *Jesus and the Zealots*, 1967, pp. 289 et seq. Schoeps looks upon the Epistle of James as a document in the antignostic struggle in the catholic church of the first half of the second century and, as such, an ecclesiastical counterpart of the Kerygmata Petrou of the Ebionitic party; H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*, 1949, pp. 343-349.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 9, notes 3 and 4; p. 10, notes 1-3.

of James could very well have originated in the circles of the earliest congregation of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Zahn takes it for granted that the people who had to lead the first congregation, people like James, Philip, Peter and John, had acquired considerable proficiency in Greek, that they certainly were able to read a Greek book or write a Greek letter and that they could speak to Hellenes and Hellenists without the mediation of an interpreter. According to Zahn, it is possible to deduce from the language of the Epistle of James that its writer had acquired his proficiency in expressing himself in Greek in everyday life and not in the school of an orator. He had plenty of opportunity of doing so in the congregation of Jerusalem. Nevertheless one repeatedly detects that there were certain limits to this person's use of Greek, a language which was not his mother tongue.<sup>2</sup> Klijn, too, takes account of a certain limitation in James's use of Greek, but considers it quite possible that James wrote this epistle: "In the epistle we have material that has been handed down, moulded perhaps in a style used in certain Christian circles. Even if James were not able to write in fluent Greek—he must have been able to set down in writing well-known material in that language. If we accept this fact, then the authorship of James is not impossible and the epistle must be dated about the year 55".<sup>3</sup> Schlatter is of the opinion that obvious phenomena can be noted in the epistle which indicate that the author was bilingual.<sup>4</sup> And according to Wikenhauser and Grosheide, it is quite natural to assume that an inhabitant of Galilee in particular was by nature bilingual, since anyone who lived in Galilee came into the closest contact with Greek culture and must certainly have known Greek.<sup>5</sup>

And so, as we see, opinions still diverge widely as to whether James, the brother of the Lord, could have known Greek, and if so, how well. One often gets the impression that, with the exception of a very few, the scholars have not studied thoroughly and concretely the possibilities in this matter, but have tended to base their judgment on probabilities lightly established, and that their judgment then follows the line which best accords with the iden-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 5, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, <sup>3</sup>1906, pp. 31 et seq., 79 et seq.; cf. C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle of James*, 1966, p. 227 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> A. F. J. Klijn, *op. cit.*, p. 134; cf. id., *De wordingsgeschiedenis van het Nieuwe Testament*, 1965, pp. 164 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> A. Schlatter, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, 1956, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> A. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 347; F. W. Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

tification of the writer of the Epistle of James that was established on other grounds. One side claims that a simple carpenter's son from Galilee could not possibly have possessed such a knowledge of Greek. The other claims that such leading persons of the earliest congregation as James, Peter and John certainly must have been able to read a Greek book or write a letter in Greek. Are there irrefutable, concrete proofs, or even more or less clear indications in support of the one or the other hypothesis? Or is the true state of affairs this: the scholars in the first group have other grounds for considering it practically impossible for James, brother of the Lord, to have written the epistle, and so have a reason for estimating James' knowledge of Greek to be as slight as possible; whereas the scholars of the second group have other grounds for preferring the tradition of the authorship of James, the brother of the Lord, and hence estimate the possibility of this inhabitant of Galilee having a knowledge of Greek to be as large as possible? Thus can be said in advance just how great the possibility of James having a knowledge of Greek will be estimated. But as long as this point has not been thoroughly investigated, such judgments can hardly be said to be the results of objective research and to possess significant value. If no clear and definite results can be obtained from such an investigation, then, in any case, this language argument will have to be used with great circumspection, and, in no case, must decisions be made on the grounds of hasty, rather superficial impressions.

There are more instances of such phenomena of a certain bias, particularly in connexion with the study of the person and position of James, the brother of the Lord. If the question is asked what is the true value of the information given about him by Hegesippus according to Eusebius, then there is no one who upholds its absolute reliability, although a marked gradation can be discerned in the criticism of the statement of Hegesippus. And even then one often gets the impression that no attempt is made to begin by establishing just what is historiography and what is fiction. On the contrary, on other grounds a given picture has been formed of the role which James played in the earliest congregation and the judgment on the significance of Hegesippus is made to fit in with it. Of course this does not mean that no scholars have ever investigated thoroughly the nature of Hegesippus' historiography and in particular his statement about James which can be found in Eusebius Church History II, 23. Schwartz, for example, meticulously endeavoured to

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determine which words and sentences were introduced by a later interpolator. His study enabled him to reconstruct the original statement.<sup>1</sup> Hyldahl includes in his reasoning the character of the Hypomnemata of Hegesippus, and in that context he also discusses his portrait of James. He believes that Hegesippus was not at all interested in Jewish Christendom. "His concern was not of an historical, but of a theoretical nature: namely to demonstrate the Jerusalem διαδοχή through his description".<sup>2</sup>

One is inclined to consider E. Schwartz's damning judgment quite definitive: "That the narrative is a legend should never have been doubted; an apologetic which takes it literally renders it as voiceless, destroys it just like the interpolator who would like to make history of it by adapting it to Josephus. The poetic fabrication is artless and obvious".<sup>3</sup> Indeed various investigators uphold this view. Ropes writes: "The narrative itself, even when purged of its inner inconsistencies, is a legend, betraying no close contact with the events, and nothing can be drawn from it to add to the picture of James's character and position derived from the N.T.". <sup>4</sup> In Munck's opinion this statement of Hegesippus is the text "which led research astray". It is a statement "from the end of the second century and has no inherent plausibility whatsoever". Hence it is his belief that "this narrative and original statements incidentally extracted from it should not be considered sources of historical value".<sup>5</sup> Kümmel is quite sure about it: "the picture given by Hegesippus of the Jewish saint is undoubtedly legendary".<sup>6</sup>

Now no one takes this statement "literally", but many assume there is a certain historical core and are of the opinion that the judgment "that the statement of Hegesippus should definitely be rejected as historical source, certainly goes to far".<sup>7</sup> It is admitted

<sup>1</sup> E. Schwartz in his article: Zu Eusebius Kirchengeschichte. I. Das Martyrium Jakobus des Gerechten in ZNW 1903, pp. 48-61; what Schwartz believes to be the original statement can also be found in J. H. Ropes, Epistle of St. James, 1916, pp. 67 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Niels Hyldahl, Hegesippus Hypomnemata, Studia Theologica, Cura ordinum theologorum Scandinavicum, 1960, pp. 70-113, Die Schilderung von Jakobus, pp. 103 et seq.; above mentioned quotation p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> E. Schwartz, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Ropes, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> J. Munck, Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte, 1954, pp. 107, 110.

<sup>6</sup> Feine-Behm-Kümmel, p. 300.

<sup>7</sup> K. Aland, Der Herrenbruder Jakobus und der Jakobusbrief, Th.L.Z. 1944, pp. 101 et seq. Here he engages in polemics with G. Kittel, ZNW, 1931, p. 145.

that the statement has a legendary tint about it, but certain data may nevertheless be taken from it. "His representation is indeed very obscure, but one might infer from it the people's esteem of James".<sup>1</sup> "From the detailed but highly legend-tinted account of Hegesippus one might infer that in his youth James aspired to the highest ideal of Jewish piety. . .".<sup>2</sup> "Basically these indications of Hegesippus could probably not be objected to as such".<sup>3</sup> At first Schoeps is of the opinion that in Eusebius, the fragments of Hegesippus "offer historical-legendary data about the later period of the earliest congregation in Jerusalem". Hegesippus was, for that matter, a "Palestinian Christian of Jewish descent". In his youth he could very well have heard from old people many things about their own experiences.<sup>4</sup> Later Schoeps abandons this view to some extent and alters his picture of the historical James.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the "no doubt legendary" of Kümmel is Carrington's pronouncement: "Its form is legendary, but its substance is perfectly credible and no doubt historical".<sup>6</sup> And Meinertz considers Hegesippus' information about the person of the brother of the Lord "of outstanding importance, because as reliable reporter in Palestine he himself was not at all far from the earliest Christendom".<sup>7</sup>

These views illustrate how much difference of opinion still prevails among scholars about the value of Hegesippus' statement for the description of James and his position in the earliest congregation. It appears that practically no one believes in the absolute historical accuracy of the picture, though there would seem to be many who believe that the broad outline of Hegesippus's picture of James is

<sup>1</sup> A. Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 1902, p. 32, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> O. Bardenheuer, *Der Brief des heiligen Jakobus*, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Bo Reicke in *Studia Paulina*, in honorem Johannis de Zwaan septuagenarii, 1953, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*, 1949, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> H. J. Schoeps, *Urgemeinde Judenchristentum Gnosis*, 1956, p. 7, note 2; Paulus, 1959, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Ph. Carrington, *The Early Christian Church*, I 1957, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup> M. Meinertz, *Der Jakobusbrief und sein Verfasser in Schrift und Überlieferung*, 1905, p. 115; cf. also E. Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem*, 1936, pp. 62 et seq.; K. Beyschlag, *Das Jakobusmartyrium und seine Verwandten in der frühchristlichen Literatur*, ZNW 1965, pp. 149-178; S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, 1967, p. 121 et seq., 188 et seq., 208 et seq.; p. 121 et seq.: As a record, it shows evidence of much confusion of thought and it contains many patent improbabilities; yet it also exhibits certain original traits that seem to indicate a primitive tradition.

correct. One will be inclined to consider Hegesippus' picture of James correct in its main aspects if on the grounds of other data one believes James must be looked upon as the representative of a Jewish-Christian school of thought which contrasted rather sharply with the heathen-Christian one and certainly with Paul, and that he also must be looked upon as a man who was still completely at home with Jewish thoughts and customs and repeatedly defended them. And although one does not accept all the details in his statement as being historically correct, although the possibility that all sorts of details are legendary is left open, the main features then accord very well with the picture formed of James on other grounds. If, however, one rejects every reminiscence of "Tübinger" contrasts, if one believes there was actually a fundamental harmony on all points in the first congregation, one will resolutely dismiss Hegesippus' statement and consider it completely legendary. Therefore we might say: tell me how a scholar interprets such passages as Gal. 2:12, Acts 15 and 21:17 et seq and I will tell you his views on the statement of Hegesippus. For example, Aland says of Gal. 2:12: "There should be no doubt about the *τινὲς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου* belonging to strict Jewish Christendom and about James resembling them". This, of course, links up perfectly with: "Anyhow one thing follows from both the accounts of Hegesippus and Josephus, and irrefutably: James was a pious Jew, meticulous in his observation of the Law".<sup>1</sup> Munck, on the contrary, believes that Gal. 2:12 definitely does not prove "that James held a pronouncedly Jewish-Christian view", and believes "The men from James need not have been other than a few Jewish-Christians from Jerusalem". In Acts 21:20 he proposes that the text runs: *πόσαι μυριάδες εἰσὶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, καὶ πάντες ζῆλωται τοῦ νόμου ὑπάρχουσιν*, and thus rejects the *τῶν πεπιστευκότων* which is definitive for the interpretation of this pericope. For then Paul is not warned about the Jewish Christians' opinion about his action, but about that of the Jews. Moreover this implies that in this pericope as well there is nothing indicative of a condemnation of Paul by a Jewish-Christian school of thought, which according to James should at least be respected. Then, indeed, can be said: "By merely crossing out two words, not only can James be assured of a good image, but a clearer text can be obtained as well". And it goes without saying that Munck does not

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<sup>1</sup> K. Aland, *op. cit.*, pp. 101 et seq.



allow Hegesippus to spoil that "good image" and finds it "difficult to understand" "that a number of scholars have attributed any historical value to this text with its many contradictions".<sup>1</sup>

Hence the opinion on the person and position of James in the earliest period of Christendom is usually founded on the interpretation of other data, and the opinion formed on the historical reliability of Hegesippus is thus the one which best accords with it. Thus what happens here resembles the evaluation of the amount of Greek which James may be presumed to have known. The statement of Hegesippus is not first adjudged according to objective criteria. The choice between complete rejection and acceptance in broad outline is determined largely by the opinion one has formed about James before even beginning to discuss the statement of Hegesippus. Consequently such a choice loses much of its significance as a decision based on objective-scientific grounds. Here, once more, one must first determine whether there might be purely objective criteria which in any case must be decisive in determining in how far Hegesippus' statement is historically reliable, in details or in broad outline. Until that is done, this piece of artillery should not be brought into position, no matter what the direction of the target.

Just as it is well worth while investigating how far we can get with establishing objective criteria for the evaluation of the historical reliability of Hegesippus, so is it certainly also most important to determine precisely how far we can get with estimating how much Greek the first Jewish Christians in Palestine knew. Only after such an investigation is carried out can be determined in how far the possibility of knowledge of Greek can be used as argument for or against in answering all sorts of questions of Introduction.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Munck, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 235 et seq, 110.



## CHAPTER ONE

### LITERARY SOURCES

#### A. THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament contains certain dispersed data which are relevant to the problem in hand. These are mostly incidental remarks which in no way are explicitly concerned with any language difficulties, but belong to a different context. It is even striking that such difficulties are not mentioned, even where they almost inevitably must have occurred in intercourse and conversation. Of course the authors of the writings in the New Testament were aware that various languages were spoken in the world about them and in that of their readers and that, for example, certain words, expressions and sentences had to be translated before they became understandable and obvious to their readers. Repeatedly, therefore, the addition of a translation was considered necessary: ὁ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεύμενον.<sup>1</sup> But nowhere is there any indication that an interpreter was needed in a given discussion. The words ἐρμηνεία and διερμηνεύειν do indeed occur, but are used to explain the glossalia<sup>2</sup> or the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> Repeated mention is made in the New Testament of conversation of which the attentive reader involuntarily wonders what the language was. But this is not told us by the writer. Nevertheless various manuscript data from antiquity reveal that there was a clear appreciation of all sorts of problems which could arise.<sup>4</sup> Josephus, for example, often mentions the need for translation during miscellaneous conversations.<sup>5</sup> He repeatedly experienced this in practice.

But it does happen that not a single remark is made about the language used on a certain occasion, even though such might reasonably be expected, and not even when the account is given by

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 1:23; Mark 5:41; 15:22, 34; John 1:38, 41; Acts 4:36; cf. ἐρμηνεύειν John 1:42; 9:7; Hebrews 7:2; διερμηνεύειν Acts 9:36, cf. Acts 13:8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24:27.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, under ἐρμηνεύω Th. W. II 659, 31 et seq.; 660,9 et seq.; Moulton-Milligan under ἐρμηνεύω, p. 254 and διερμηνεύω, p. 160.

<sup>5</sup> Contra Apionem I:49; B.J. V:361; VI:96, 129, 327.

an eye witness. Philo Alexandrinus gives a detailed account of the journey he made to Rome with an Alexandrine-Jewish legation. The two meetings with Gaius are described in full,<sup>1</sup> but not one word is said about the language they spoke with the emperor. Why not? Because Philo naturally assumed that Greek was spoken on that occasion? In any case, since Alexandrine Jews of the diaspora certainly spoke good Greek and Philo does not mention the presence of an interpreter during the conversation, the obvious assumption is that the emperor and the legation from Alexandria conversed in Greek. Philo, however, did not consider it necessary to mention this especially.

Is that the reason why not a single remark is made in the New Testament when describing contacts between persons who, because of origin, nationality, locality, spoke different languages? In the description of Paul's conversations with Felix and Festus, no indication is given as to the language they spoke.<sup>2</sup> Is it taken for granted that the apostle spoke Greek with the Roman governor and that consequently the talks involved no difficulties as to language? This is the obvious supposition. Paul, a Jew of the diaspora, citizen of Tarsus, knew Greek. He not only wrote letters in that language, but probably spoke it fluently. That is evident when a chiliarch first of all takes him for an Egyptian rioter whom he probably thought incapable of speaking Greek, and then suddenly realises from Paul's Greek that he is someone else. And although it is stated immediately afterwards that standing at the top of the steps of the temple Paul addressed the masses  $\tau\eta\ \epsilon\beta\rho\alpha\iota\delta\iota\ \delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\omega$ , that was evidently not a matter of course for the audience. On the contrary, Paul was probably expected to speak in Greek, but when he unexpectedly started to speak in the Hebrew language  $\mu\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu\ \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\ \eta\sigma\upsilon\chi\iota\alpha\nu$ . The audience would have understood him wholly or in part if he had spoken Greek—in any case they would have listened attentively—but now that he addressed them in a language better known to them, they were the more quiet.<sup>3</sup> Moreover it is quite possible that in this case Paul had a special reason for speaking  $\tau\eta\ \epsilon\beta\rho\alpha\iota\delta\iota\ \delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\omega$  to the people. According to James, the Jews were suspicious of him, because it was said he taught all the Jews among the

<sup>1</sup> Legatio ad Gaium, 181-183 and 349-367.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 24:24 et seq.; 25:6 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 21:37-22:2., cf. R. O. P. Taylor, *The Expository Times* 1944/45, p. 96.

heathens defection from Moses by telling them they did not have to circumcise their children nor to live according to their customs (Acts 21:21). Faced with a crowd that was inclined to believe in such an accusation, it was highly expedient that he emphasised the fact that he was a Jew. How could he demonstrate that more effectively and irrefutably than by speaking to them in the Hebrew language.<sup>1</sup>

Hence it may be presumed that Paul knew, read, wrote and spoke Greek; these questions are more difficult to answer when they pertain to the language Jesus spoke during certain meetings. And yet not a word is said of these difficulties in the Gospels. An allusion to such has sometimes been discerned in the description of an encounter between Jesus and certain Greeks.<sup>2</sup> These "Ἑλληνές τινες" are generally taken to be Greeks, for example from the towns of the Decapolis, who had become proselytes and had gone to Jerusalem for the occasion of the Jewish festival. These Greeks wished to become acquainted with Jesus. They did not turn directly to Jesus, however, but to Philip who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus". Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus" (John 12:21). Why did these Greeks not address themselves personally to Jesus, why did they call in the mediation of another person? Sometimes the reason for this is sought in the language problem and the conclusion is then that the writer of the fourth Gospel assumes that Jesus did not belong to the Greek-speaking Jews.<sup>3</sup> It is then pointed out that Philip is explicitly stated to have come from Bethsaida in Galilee. In an earlier passage in the Gospel, both Philip and Andrew are said to have originally come from Bethsaida (John 1:43 et seq.). Both have true Greek names which, according to Dalman, prove "their relationship with Greek cultural circles". Bernard is of the opinion that these Greek proselytes were encouraged to speak to Philip because he had a Greek name,<sup>4</sup> but this does not mean that the commentator necessarily wishes to imply that these Greeks supposed that Jesus did not understand Greek. Zahn's explanation of the statement that it was precisely Philip

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Friedlaender, *Revue des Études juives*, 1887, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> John 12:20 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus-Jeschua*, 1922, p. 5; cf. p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Bernard, *A critical and exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*, Vol. II, 1928, p. 430.

to whom the Greeks turned is as follows: "From the population of Galilee which was to a great extent mixed with heathens of various nationalities and certainly in the town of Bethsaida-Julias located near the border of the country of Herodes Antipas and his brother Philip, these Gentiles could in the first instance count on a friendly reception". The reason for not turning directly to Jesus is not sought by him in the language difficulty, but "the Greeks do not dare to address Jesus directly. They turn politely to his companion. . ."<sup>1</sup> All these explanations, however, are based on suppositions, and there is no certainty that an allusion is made here to language difficulties. In any case it would be going too far to draw from this pericope conclusions about how much Greek the fourth evangelist supposed Jesus to know.

Neither is any mention made elsewhere in the Gospels how much Greek Jesus knew, if at all, although this question automatically springs to mind when reading the descriptions of certain encounters. This applies primarily to the talk between Jesus and Pilate. From John 12:20 et seq. Dalman concludes that the Gospel of John presumes "that Jesus did not belong to the Greek-speaking Jews", but also that the Gospel "rightly assumes that a knowledge of Greek was normal in Galilee. . ." and goes on to say ". . .but then it cannot exclude from this knowledge the Galilean Jesus, who according to it also talks to the Roman procurator (John 18:34 et seq.: 19:11)."<sup>2</sup> Dalman thus takes it for granted that Jesus spoke Greek with Pilate. Since an interpreter is not mentioned in the rather detailed report of the talks between Pilate and the representatives of the Sanhedrin and Jesus, it is indeed often concluded that no language problems whatsoever arose during these talks and that an interpreter was therefore not needed.<sup>3</sup> This in no way implies that Jesus spoke Greek as fluently as his native language, which he spoke daily. Birkeland assumes that probably Pilate asked Jesus in Greek, without using an interpreter: Are you the King of the Jews, and that probably Jesus replied in Greek: You have said so. Birkeland

<sup>1</sup> Th. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, <sup>3,4</sup>1912, pp. 511, 510.

<sup>2</sup> Dalman, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Th. Zahn, *Einl.* <sup>3</sup>1906, p. 29; cf. A. Schlatter, *Die Kirche Jerusalems*, 1898, p. 52; id., *Sprache und Heimat des vierten Evangelisten*, 1902, p. 9; id., *Geschichte des Christus*, <sup>2</sup>1923, p. 42; G. Kittel, *Die Probleme des palästinischen Spätjudentums und das Urchristentum*, 1926, p. 38; F. W. Grosheide, *De brief aan de Hebreeën en de brief van Jakobus*, <sup>2</sup>1955, p. 326.

not only gives this as Dalman's opinion, but says later himself in his conclusions: it is probable that Jesus knew some Greek. But for him this does not mean that Jesus ever addressed the people in Greek: "it is impossible to assume that Jesus addressed the people in Greek".<sup>1</sup> It is quite clear, however, that distinguishing such a difference is a matter based on personal considerations, not on data in the text itself.

If from the absence of any mention of an interpreter present at the talk between Jesus and Pilate it is concluded that they spoke Greek with each other without using an interpreter, then this conclusion is the obvious one to be drawn from other passages where such mention is not made and it is likely that Greek was spoken at least on some occasions. If we are repeatedly told that many crowds from Galilee and also from the Decapolis and the Transjordan followed Jesus,<sup>2</sup> and if it is sometimes also said of Jesus that he was in the country of the Gadarenes and in the region of the Decapolis,<sup>3</sup> we must naturally assume that he was able to speak directly to the people of these regions in the language, which was certainly spoken by very many, in Greek. Did he converse with the Roman centurion in Capernaum in this language, or was that not necessary since this centurion spoke Aramaic? <sup>4</sup> Did he speak Greek with the Syro-Phoenician woman, of whom it is said explicitly that she was Greek? True, it is possible that the designation Ἑλληνίς is meant primarily to indicate she was a heathen, and thus applies to her religion and not her language,<sup>5</sup> although in my opinion a reference to Acts 17:12 and Rom. 1:16 is not particularly convincing in this instance, nevertheless it probably also refers to the language she spoke.<sup>6</sup> In any case, if Greek is the language in which Jesus spoke

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<sup>1</sup> Harris Birkeland, *The Language of Jesus*, Avhandlingar utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II, Historisk-Filosofisk Klasse, 1951, pp. 17, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 4:25; Mark 3:8.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 5:1; 7:31.

<sup>4</sup> The latter assumed in Arnold Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache*, 1896, p. 63, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 1951, p. 146, Note 1; F. Hauck, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 1931, p. 94; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, 1953, p. 349.

<sup>6</sup> M. J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 1947, p. 194; Dalman, *Jesus*, p. 5; Wohlenberg, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 1910, pp. 212 et seq.

to Pilate, there is no reason to limit it to this occasion and to consider it less likely in the talk with this woman.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of Acts 6 mention is made of the difference which arose between the Ἑλληνισταί and the Ἑβραῖοι, and this is of great importance for the language problem, especially if these names refer primarily to a difference in the language spoken by these two groups, and if the two groups belonged to Jewry. A well-known fact, however, is that as yet no communis opinio has been reached as to the explanation of these names and that they are certainly not always taken to refer to a difference of language in Jewry.

Cullmann has repeatedly defended the hypothesis that here the name Hellenists designates a group of Jews who deviated from the official Judaism, "showing tendencies, more or less esoteric, of a syncretistic origin". He believes this same group is referred to in the words of Jesus in John 4:38 by ἄλλοι and that it did missionary work in Samaria even before the apostles. Now the fourth Gospel most clearly has a certain connexion with the Qumran group and thus is also a link between Qumran and the Jewish-Christian esoteric group of the Hellenists. The connexion between the last two groups is also demonstrated by the attitude of both towards the temple. This hypothesis has been discussed by Cullmann in diverse contexts.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it is not in the least probable. It has many weak points and is based here and there on very uncertain suppositions. In the first place it is absolutely not true that the Greek word from which Hellenist is derived, "hellenizein", does not mean "to speak Greek", but "to live in the Greek manner".<sup>3</sup> Any

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<sup>1</sup> According to T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, 1963, p. 46. The question whether Jesus knew Greek is discussed in *The Expository Times*: A. W. Argyle, *Did Jesus Speak Greek*, E. T. 1955, pp. 92 et seq.; J. K. Russell, *Did Jesus Speak Greek*, E. T. 1956, p. 246; H. Mudie Draper, *Did Jesus Speak Greek*, E.T. 1956, p. 317; Argyle replies to the objections of Mudie Draper in E.T. 1956, p. 383; he is once more attacked on certain points by R. McL. Wilson in E.T. 1957, pp. 121 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, O. Cullmann, 'La Samarie et les origines de la mission chrétienne. Qui sont les "alloi" de Jean IV, 38?' *Annuaire 1953-1954 de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, pp. 3 et seq.; id., *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1957, pp. 187 et seq.; id., *Beginnings of Christianity*, in Krister Stendahl, *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, 1958, pp. 25 et seq.; id., *L'opposition contre le temple de Jérusalem, motif commun de la théologie johannique et du monde ambiant*, N.T.S. 1959, pp. 163 et seq.; above mentioned English quotation in Stendahl, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Stendahl, p. 26; cf. also Walter Schmithals, *Paulus und Jakobus*, 1963, p. 19.



larger Greek dictionary could have convinced Cullmann that this pronouncement in no way obtains without exception. The original meaning of 'hellenizo' is precisely 'to speak Greek'. In the teaching of rhetorics, 'Hellenismos' indicated the correct grammatical use of the Greek language, of Greek free of barbarisms and solecisms. Therefore this was the meaning of the word, for example, in the fourth century B.C. in Greece. It was only later that outside Greece the word sometimes acquired the meaning of to adopt a Greek way of life. But there is no question of it having to have this meaning in Acts 6.<sup>1</sup> That could only be made more feasible if the other arguments in favour of this hypothesis were convincing. Several, however, are definitely not so. As such may not be considered the reference to the similarity in attitude towards the temple between the 'Hellenists' and the people of Qumran. In Acts 6 and 7 there is simply opposition to the temple and the temple service; the Qumran group, on the contrary, does condemn the temple service not as such, but objects strongly because it is carried out by unworthy priests, according to an inaccurate calendar. Moreover a combination of an esoteric-syncretistic Hellenism with the intensively law-minded group of Qumran can hardly be considered conceivable. Finally not one water-tight argument can be put forward to support the assumption that a group of Hellenists is alluded to in John 4:38.<sup>2</sup>

The language problem here would also acquire a very special character if 'Ἑλληνισταί' were interpreted as 'Ἕλληνες', thus as heathens. That is advocated by Cadbury in diverse linguistic arguments,<sup>3</sup> and Windisch follows him in this, though not without hesitation, since he too believes Cadbury has not succeeded in eliminating all objections.<sup>4</sup> Leaving aside a minute consideration of all the pros and cons, I should like to mention the two arguments against, which in my opinion are the most weighty:

(1) It is not plausible that already at so early a stage the Jerusalem congregation consisted of Jewish and heathen Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, 1962, pp. 107-109; cf. Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 1959, p. 45: "The basic meaning of *hellenizein* ('to hellenize') is 'to speak Greek', and its proper use is with reference to people who would not normally be expected to do so. In its wider sense 'hellenization' is the adoption of Greek modes of behavior in general by people not themselves Greek."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 1959, pp. 214 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> H. J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. V, pp. 59-74.

<sup>4</sup> H. Windisch, Art, "'Ἕλλην'", *Th. W.z.N.T.* II, pp. 508 et seq.

Cadbury's reference to Acts 2:8 et seq. does not obviate this objection;

(2) In Acts 9:29 mention is also made of Ἑλληνισταί. Here again it is not likely that Paul debated with Greeks, with heathens, already during his visit to Jerusalem. A more plausible explanation is that here Greek-speaking Jews are indicated.

Again and again it is also argued that the Hellenists were members of the congregation who lived entirely independent of the Law, and that the persecution referred to in Acts 8:1 did not actually apply to the entire Jerusalem congregation, as stated there, but to these antinomians "who entirely rejected the Law and not only denied a special relationship between Israel and God, but also endangered the existence of the people; for the "Law" was also the basis of Jewish self-rule in Palestine".<sup>1</sup>

This hypothesis could indeed explain why such severe persecution burst out after Stephen's action and execution. The persecution of these Hellenists who declared the Law invalid and lived independently of it would then be a campaign that was absolutely necessary for Jewish national and religious self-preservation. Moreover a certain similarity has rightly been discerned between the accusations made against Stephen in Acts 6:14 and the suspicions expressed of Paul in Acts 21:21, 28, though it is of some significance that precisely the κατὰ τοῦ νόμου of Acts 21:28 is not present in Acts 6:14.

Nevertheless this identification of the Hellenists of Acts 6:1 with part of the congregation of Jerusalem that wanted complete freedom from the Law in doctrine and life remains an hypothesis which cannot be deduced directly from the material in Acts and which necessitates the assumption of all sorts of inaccuracies in the narrative of Luke. For example, it is clear that in Acts 8:1 it is presumed that the entire congregation of Jerusalem is persecuted, and not just a group of Hellenists. And from the text itself it cannot be inferred with certainty that πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων really is a remin-

<sup>1</sup> Walter Schmithals, *Paulus und Jakobus*, 1963, p. 18; cf. G.P. Wetter, *Das älteste hellenistische Christentum nach der Apostelgeschichte*, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1922, pp. 410 et seq.; W. Bauer, *Jesus der Galiläer*, in *Festgabe für A. Jülicher*, 1927, pp. 32 et seq. (This article has been reprinted in: *Walter Bauer, Aufsätze und kleine Schriften*, herausgeg. von Georg Strecker, 1967, pp. 91 et seq.); M. Simon, *St. Stephen and the Hellenists*, 1958, pp. 12 et seq.; E. Käsemann, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, II, 1964, pp. 88 et seq.; U. Wilckens, *Hellenistisch-christliche Missionsüberlieferung und Jesus-tradition*, in *Th LZ* 1964, pp. 517-520; B. C. Lategan, *Die aardse Jesus in die prediking van Paulus volgens sy briewe*, 1967, pp. 158-161.

der that the Ἑβραῖοι were left in peace and only the Ἑλληνισταί were persecuted. Moreover what is said of Stephen may not be taken as applicable to the entire group of Hellenists, and hence the meaning of the word in Acts 6:1 is to be interpreted accordingly. Often, too, the writers who uphold this solution, presume too readily that ἐλληνίζειν refers primarily to a philosophy and way of living and not to the speaking of the Greek language. This is not so, however.

Hence Ἑλληνισταί in Acts 6:1 most probably refers to those Jewish Christians who had lived for a shorter or longer period in the diaspora, had learned to speak Greek there or had spoken it for generations already and had now settled down in Jerusalem. As Jews of the diaspora, they had had their own synagogues there (Acts 6:9), where Greek, now become completely their mother tongue, was spoken. Since there was and had been difference in language between the various groups of Jews in Jerusalem, it obviously continued to exist between the Jews in the Christian congregation of that town. That does not necessarily imply that these Ἑλληνισταί had adopted the Greek culture, though their contact with it was naturally closer than when an ignorance of the language would have involuntarily cut them off more completely from it. They were people who spoke Greek in their daily life at home, even though they would not always have lost their knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic and would perhaps still have understood both. But they no longer spoke those languages regularly and sometimes they would have forgotten them entirely. People who had lived with their families for a long time, sometimes for many generations, in practically completely Hellenistic surroundings and had heard and spoken practically nothing other than Greek each day, would hardly have spoken any other language than this one when they went to live in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

If Ἑλληνισταί does, indeed, refer to the Hellenistic Jews of the diaspora, whose mother tongue had become Greek and who joined the Christian congregation after settling in Jerusalem, then

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Haenchen, *op. cit.*, p. 220; Jaeger, *op. cit.*, pp. 108 et seq.; J. Munck, Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte, 1954, pp. 212-222; H. J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums, 1949, pp. 303 et seq.: "Hellenisten = griechischsprachige Rassejuden"; H. H. Wendt, Die Apostelgeschichte, 1899, p. 141; H. W. Beyer, Die Apostelgeschichte, 1932, pp. 42 et seq.; H. Conzelmann, Die Apostelgeschichte, 1963, p. 43: "Die Hellenisten sind Juden griechischer Muttersprache"; F. F. Bruce 'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'?, N.T.S. 1963, pp. 231 et seq.

probably in this case 'Εβραῖοι also refers primarily to the difference in language and was the name of Hebrew-speaking Jews, born mostly in Palestine, who became members of the first congregation in Jerusalem. Gutbrod accentuates the latter aspect, being born in Palestine, "since in this bilingual country the Aramaic mother tongue of the one group was not an unsurmountable barrier in the contacts with the other group". Therefore, "the 'Εβραῖοι from Acts 6:1 would very probably be those born in Palestine, who quite naturally would have formed a separate group in the congregation, which differed from those who came later to Palestine, whether Jews who had returned home from the diaspora or proselytes".<sup>1</sup> That Palestine in those days was to a large degree bilingual need not be contested in order to envisage the possibility of the Jews of the diaspora having so forgotten Aramaic and Hebrew because of their daily use of Greek that they could hardly understand these languages any more, let alone speak them.

Similarly the meaning which the word 'Εβραῖος has in two passages in the Epistles of Paul (2 Cor. 11:22 and Phil. 3:5) is not, I believe, definitive for the interpretation of that word in Acts 6:1. In my opinion, it obviously must be interpreted on each occasion according to the concrete situation, and it can sometimes change in meaning. For example, a lively discussion is being held on the question of the significance of this word when it occurs in inscriptions as a more precise reference to certain synagogues. The existence of a Γαδία πατρός συναγωγῆς Αἰβρεων has long been known, and also of the mutilated inscription on a synagogue in Corinth: (συν)αγωγῇ 'Εβρ. Deissmann believed that this was an indication of "...Aramaic-speaking Jews from Palestine who organised themselves according to country in foreign parts". Objections have rightly been made to this interpretation. If this was expressed as the special characteristic of a synagogue, it very soon changed. It did not even hold good for the second generation of Jews in that particular town. Other interpretations of this word have therefore been proposed: when the synagogue was founded, the terms Jews and Hebrews were used indiscriminately. Leon was similarly faced with this problem, because four of the Jewish inscriptions in Rome contain the phrase "synagogue of the Hebrews". His conclusion was that the first group of Jews who formed a congregation in Rome

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<sup>1</sup> W. Gutbrod, Article: 'Ισραήλ, ThW.z.NT III, pp. 392 et seq.

naturally would have called themselves a congregation or synagogue of Hebrews, as distinct from other religious or ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case may be, it is obvious enough from all this that the meaning of Ἑβραῖοι cannot be established on the grounds of comparison, but that it must be determined according to the concrete situation in which it is used.

Very probably, then, the word Ἑβραῖοι indicates primarily a difference in language. There was a time when, because of diverse arguments, it was considered an established fact that Aramaic was the mother tongue of the Jews born in Palestine, and hence also of the Hebrews in Acts 6:1. This opinion still prevails. It is not only Zahn, for instance, who takes Hebrews here to mean: "the natives who remained true to the Aramaic vernacular", but even a modern commentator such as Haenchen defines them as "the Aramaic-speaking Jews born in Palestine".<sup>2</sup> And so, since Meyer, Zahn and Dalman published their comprehensive studies on this subject, it has become practically a generally accepted tradition that the mother tongue of Jesus, the language he knew best and therefore usually spoke, was Aramaic.<sup>3</sup> In the second impression of his "Die Worte

<sup>1</sup> E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, III, 1909, p. 83; A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 1923, pp. 12 et seq.; J. Munck, *op. cit.*, pp. 212 et seq.; H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-149. The latter, who had found the above solution himself, later discovered it in La Piana whom he believes was the first to put forward this interpretation. Zahn, however, had already supposed that the reference in this synagogue-inscription in Rome—the only one known at that time—was to "die neuerdings aus dem Orient zugewanderten Juden" Th. Zahn, *Einl.*, p. 33; P. Jean-Baptiste Frey C.S.SP., *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum I*, 1936, p. LXXVI: "Nous pensons que ce terme a désigné à l'origine une communauté de Juifs récemment immigrés de Judée . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Zahn, *Einl.* I, p. 27; Haenchen, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> From the extensive literature on the subject I select in particular Arnold Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache*, 1896; Zahn, *Einl.* I<sup>3</sup> 1906, pp. 1-24: *Die Ursprache des Evangeliums*; G. Dalman, *Jesus-Jeschua*, 1922, pp. 6-15: *Das Aramäische als die Muttersprache Jesu*; id., *Die Worte Jesu*, 1930, pp. 1-10: *Das Aramäische als Sprache der Juden*; Poul Nepper-Christensen, *Das Matthäusevangelium, ein judenchristliches Evangelium*, 1958, p. 105, gives a selection from the many authors, who, up to the present, assume that Aramaic was the colloquial language of the Jews in Palestine. This author also devotes a lengthy chapter to: *Die sprachlichen Verhältnisse zu Beginn unserer Zeitrechnung*, pp. 101-135; M. Black, *The Recovery of the Language of Jesus*, N.T.S. 1957, pp. 305-313; id., *The Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 1961, pp. 192-198; P. Kahle, *Das palästinische Pentateuch-targum und das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäisch*, ZNW 1958, pp. 100-116; E. G. Kutscher, *Das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäisch*, ZNW 1960, pp. 46 et seq.; P. Kahle, *Erwiderung*, ib. pp. 55 et seq.; J. J. Koopmans, *Suppl. to Novum Testamentum XIX*

Jesu", Dalman therefore considers it scarcely necessary to explain once more in detail that the 'Hebrew'-speaking Jews of Palestine actually spoke Aramaic, and not Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is assumed that, wherever mention is made of the Hebrew language either anywhere in the New Testament or even elsewhere, as in the statement of Papias about the Gospel of Matthew, Aramaic is what is actually meant. This hypothesis can no longer be said to be uncontested. Birkeland and Nepper-Christensen in particular have argued that where there is any question of the 'Εβραϊς διάλεκτος, Hebrew and not Aramaic is really meant.

This is not the place to go into this problem in detail. Suffice it to say that, in my opinion, it has become evident, also from various archeological findings, that in Jesus' days Hebrew occupied a more important position than was formerly thought. Nevertheless there is no clear evidence that it was the colloquial language, and many of the arguments which Zahn and especially Dalman put forward as proof that Aramaic was the mother tongue of Jesus still hold good. Dalman, for example, supported his argument by drawing attention to the numerous Aramaic words and expressions used in the New Testament, including words spoken by Jesus. As for the latter, there could be some doubt about which word exactly the Greek represents,<sup>2</sup> but it is indisputably true that Aramaic words have been rendered here and there and that these include a few spoken by Jesus. Birkeland does not deny this, but has an unusual explanation for this phenomenon. According to him, precisely those few Aramaic words in the Gospels prove that Jesus did not normally speak Aramaic. His line of reasoning is as follows: Jesus naturally did not speak to the Jews in Greek. Hence all the words we read in the Gospels are translated into Greek. Why, then, do we find among them a few which have not been translated? Some have believed that these were special words, "powerful" words, which the tradition meant to preserve in their original form. In reality it is quite simple, however. Birkeland elucidates this by means of comparison. In a book translated into English from a foreign language we find a few

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De literatuur over het Aramees na 1940, JEOL 1957-1958, pp. 125-132; H. Ott, *Um die Muttersprache Jesu; Forschungen seit Gustaf Dalman*, *Novum Testamentum*, Vol. IX, 1967, pp. 1-25.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Worte Jesu*, 2<sup>1930</sup>, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., for instance, Isaac Rabinowitz, "Be opened" = Ὁφθαλμα (Mk 7:34): Did Jesus speak Hebrew? ZNW 1962, pp. 229-238.

words or sentences which are not English. This could lead us to conclude that those words and sentences were also in a foreign language in the original text. For example, French words in a German book would not be translated in an English book, even if all the rest of the book were translated into that language. Now the same can be said of the Aramaic words of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus only spoke Aramaic a few times. The memory of this fact is faithfully preserved in the tradition reproduced in the Gospel of Mark, and when the latter was translated into Greek, the Aramaic words that were in a 'foreign language' in the original context were left untranslated. Because of the Aramaic words in Mk. 5:41 and 7:34, the writer of the Mark tradition believed that Jesus spoke Aramaic and therefore translated into that language the words spoken on the cross in Mark 15:34. For that matter it still must be demonstrated that they were not originally spoken in Aramaic. Bystanders infer from these words that Jesus calls Elijah. That would only be possible if he cried "eli, eli" and not "eloi, eloi". And since *sabaq* is a verb which occurs in Mishnah-Hebrew as well as in Aramaic, the original words on the cross were spoken in "the Hebrew dialectal speech of Jesus". Hence the text of Mk. 15:34 came into being because Mark translated the "eli", from his source into the Aramaic "eloi", since he wrongly believed that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Like the modern scholars, he was led astray, because he misinterpreted the 'original' Aramaic words of Jesus in Mk. 5:41 and 7:34. In actual fact, however, Jesus spoke a language that was neither Aramaic nor classical Hebrew, but identical with Mishnah-Hebrew.<sup>1</sup>

Birkeland's paragraph on the Aramaic words of Jesus thus forms an important link in his argument that Jesus spoke Hebrew, not Aramaic, and that in those days the language of the Jews was not, on the whole, Aramaic, but a certain form of Hebrew. Nepper-Christensen, who is mainly interested in discussing whether the first Gospel was a Jewish-Christian gospel and hence must treat of the meaning of Ἑβραῖς διάλεκτος in the statement of Papias about the writer of that Gospel, follows Birkeland in his line of reasoning and at times goes even further. He accuses Birkeland of a certain measure of inconsequence in his treatment of Acts 6:1 et seq. "Here Birkeland obviously does not know the ins and outs of it".

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<sup>1</sup> Birkeland, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 et seq.; cf. H. Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 et seq.

Indeed one would expect that here too he would support his view that the language spoken at that time was Hebrew. Here, however, he assumes that the colloquial language of these 'Hebraioi' was definitely Aramaic. Nepper-Christensen does not wish to assert that Acts 6:1 et seq. proves that Hebrew was spoken in Jerusalem, but believes nonetheless "that this passage should be taken much more into consideration than hitherto when investigating the language situation prevailing in Palestine".<sup>1</sup>

Birkeland's argumentation about the occurrence of Aramaic words spoken by Jesus in the second Gospel is, in my opinion, not sound. The difficulties concerning the text in Mk. 15:34, however, are great. The misinterpretation of Jesus' word as an invocation to Elijah is indeed easier to understand if he said "eli, eli" and not "eloi, eloi". Moreover, the problem of the text criticism is complicated by the derivation of this word on the cross from Psalm 22: adaptation to the original Hebrew text was the obvious reaction. And so opinions still differ as to the original words of Jesus' exclamation. Some believe Jesus used the Hebrew words, others that he spoke them in Aramaic.<sup>2</sup> The originality of the Aramaic form is, I believe, the most plausible. In a certain sense for that matter, it is the *lectio difficilior* in the context in which it stands. It is understandable that Matthew used "eli, eli" to make the bystanders' erroneous interpretation of the word as an invocation to Elijah more acceptable.

But no matter how complicated the textual problems pertaining to Mk. 15:34 are, and no matter how little absolute certainty there is about using this word on the cross in a discussion of the language situation in those days, the explanation given by Birkeland has very little to recommend itself. In the first place one wonders why Jesus should have spoken Aramaic on a few occasions, if he were in the habit of speaking Hebrew. Birkeland admits of Mk. 5:41 and 7:34: "There is no doubt as to the Aramaic origin of these words", but "He (Jesus) only used that language a few times".<sup>3</sup> If Birkeland does not support the explanation that here a few exceptionally 'powerful' words of Jesus are reproduced, what then does he give as reason for Jesus' speaking Aramaic as an exception in these two instances? Furthermore it is not particularly plausible that Mark

<sup>1</sup> Birkeland, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Nepper-Christensen, *op. cit.*, p. 123, note 138.

<sup>2</sup> V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, 1953, p. 593, enumerates various representatives of both groups.

<sup>3</sup> Birkeland, *op. cit.*, pp. 24 et seq.



was misled by this very sporadic use of a few Aramaic words by Jesus, consequently assumed that Jesus always spoke Aramaic and therefore translated into Aramaic the words on the cross which were originally handed down to him in Hebrew. Even if Mark had allowed himself to be misled by the few Aramaic words of Jesus which he found in the tradition and reproduced in Mk. 5:41 and 7:34, there still would have been every reason for him to leave in the original Hebrew these words which were undoubtedly known to him from Psalm 22. Moreover, may we assume that Mark was so little acquainted with what language Jesus normally spoke that he allowed himself to be misled by a few Aramaic words which he found in his tradition? That is indeed very unlikely. Chronologically he did not live far-removed from the events of Jesus' life, and even if we do not accept as fully accurate in all respects Papias' statement about Mark's contact with Peter, if we identify the writer with John Mark, we must also assume that he heard of Jesus and his preaching at close hand and perhaps even experienced certain events in his life. Then it is extremely unlikely that he would have been so ill informed about Jesus' language that he allowed himself to be easily misled on this point.

Hence the most plausible conclusion is that all sorts of data in the Gospels argue that the language spoken daily by Jesus and many of his Jewish-Palestinian contemporaries was Aramaic and that in it the 'Εβραῖοι mentioned in Acts 6:1 certainly were distinct from the 'Ελληνισταί. This does not mean, of course, that they did not know Hebrew as well, or perhaps even Greek. It is quite possible that the separation in the language of the congregation of Jerusalem came into being mainly because the Hellenists used almost exclusively Greek and could scarcely understand anything else. The Hebrews used Aramaic in their daily intercourse and also their meetings of the congregation, and hence they formed a separate group, though they probably understood and perhaps even spoke more Greek than the Hellenists Aramaic. The fact that Greek was a world-language in those days, naturally stimulated the former tendency more than the latter.<sup>1</sup> However this may be, if the distinction between Hellenists and Hebrews is related primarily to a difference in language, then Acts 6:1 contains a significant in-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. F. D. Moule: *Once More, Who were the Hellenists?* The Expository Times 1959, pp. 100-102; W. G. Kümmel, RGG<sup>3</sup>VI, p. 1189.

dication that there were large groups in the Jewish-Christian congregation in Jerusalem who spoke mainly and perhaps even exclusively Greek and others who did not speak this language regularly.

Hence it is certain that two languages were spoken in Palestine at that time, though not always by everyone, namely Greek and Aramaic. Perhaps this is why it is not coincidental that in the list of Acts 2:9 et seq., Greece, Palestine and Syria are not mentioned. Indeed this list concerned peoples who spoke foreign languages, and so the Jews and Greeks were automatically excluded, for in Palestine they did not speak a foreign language.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. THE RABBINICAL WRITINGS

These writings are obviously highly important sources for the investigation into the knowledge of Greek among the Jews in Palestine and hence also the knowledge of Greek which the Jewish Christians could possibly have had. There are various problems, however. To begin with these writings contain statements dating from widely divergent periods. If they are to be used for forming an opinion about the knowledge of Greek among the first Christians, of about the first century A.D., then it is necessary to know from which period the rabbinical dicta date. When, in his refutation of the construction of the linguistic isolation of the earliest Christendom, Kittel points out the occurrence of 1100 Greek loan-words from all ages in the Talmud, all these 1100 loan-words are not of equal significance.<sup>2</sup> This fact was certainly appreciated by Kittel himself, for in his book he specifically and emphatically expresses the need for an investigation into the chronology of the dicta of the rabbinical writings. When even Lieberman, who wrote such an important book on the use of Greek among the Jews of Palestine, says in his preface that the material from the Talmud and Midrash which he discusses is limited generally to the second to fourth centuries A.D., then this is no insignificant chronological divergence if one is occupied with evaluating the knowledge of Greek among the Jews and Christians in Palestine in the first century A.D.<sup>3</sup> It will appear below that these same difficulties are also encountered with regard to the archeological data. In various fourth century synagogues in Palestine clear

<sup>1</sup> G. Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Haenchen, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> G. Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 1942, p. viii.

indications of the use of the Greek language are to be found. Is it permissible to back-date this phenomenon a couple of centuries and use it to opine on the measure of knowledge of Greek in the first century? This will certainly not be done, if there are no indications of this nature dating from the first century itself.

Now the question is whether the difference in time between the dicta of the rabbinical writings should not be evaluated otherwise than that between the archeological findings. No matter how difficult it is to determine the chronological relationship between the various dicta,<sup>1</sup> the names of rabbis who made the pronouncements are often given exactly, and if the roughly chronological list of rabbinical teachers appended by Danby to his edition of the Mishnah<sup>2</sup> may be used, very many rabbinical dicta can be dated approximately. All this provided, of course, tradition has ascribed the dicta to the right persons.

Moreover, in view of the stability of the tradition, it is often quite possible that the contents of a dictum, which can be placed chronologically with some degree of accuracy, existed long before that year. Needless to say such back-dating of the validity of a rabbinical pronouncement must always be done with great circumspection. For example those 1100 loan-words certainly may not be used in the framework of a dissertation on the language relationships in the first century A.D.

There are certain other difficulties in connexion with those loan-words. The extent of the material and the evaluation of its importance for the investigation into the real knowledge of Greek are in no way fixed. The first to compile a very comprehensive list was Samuel Krauss.<sup>3</sup> His work was anything but a scholarly success. Perhaps not everyone will judge Krauss's work so harshly as Rosen, who called it "a beginner's work and full of diletantism, judged even by its author as unfit for publication until Immanuel Löw's

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, L. Ginzberg, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Mischnah*, in: *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstage D. Hoffmanns*, 1914: one example of the problems which can be encountered here is the comparison of two pronouncements in the Mishnah, which are highly significant in connexion with the present subject, Meg. I:8 and Yad. IV: 5, 6, the first of which is assumed by Ginzberg to contain an earlier halakah than the second. Cf. Robert Gordis, "Homeric" books in Palestine, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1948, pp. 363 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 1933, pp. 799 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> S. Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 1898-1900.

often destructive remarks had been added—in print—to Krauss's explanations, more often than not to say that the author's words were sheer nonsense".<sup>1</sup> Immediately upon its publication the book was severely criticised, and especially its often wild, fantastic combinations were adjudged scientifically bereft of any value at all.<sup>2</sup> Even those who consider the collection of these loan-words in itself a work of great importance are convinced that there still remains an urgent need for a book containing the Greek words in the Talmud and Midrash, in which Krauss's list is thoroughly revised and critically edited and, for example, the vocalisation of alien words is investigated in a more reliable fashion.<sup>3</sup>

The investigation into the Greek loan-words in the Talmud and Midrash will have to be continued for a long time as yet. There does not seem to be much prospect of unanimous and well-founded results being speedily reached on certain points. Close cooperation is greatly to be desired with scholars who are thoroughly acquainted with the rabbinical writings and with the semitic languages or Greek, or better still with both. Only then is there any hope that what is said of Krauss will not be repeated, namely that one out of every three 'etymologies' given by him is inaccurate.<sup>4</sup>

Although this investigation therefore requires much thorough and detailed work, there need be no doubt about the occurrence of a very great many Greek loan-words in the rabbinical writings. This fact may therefore be taken as a starting point for our investigation, even though particular attention must then be paid to the chronological difficulties.<sup>5</sup> If these are fully admitted and consequently the number

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<sup>1</sup> Haiim B. Rosen, *Palestinian KOINH in Rabbinic Illustration*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1963, pp. 56-72. Above mentioned quotation p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, F. Fränkel, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1898, pp. 290-300.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lieberman, *Greek*, pp. 6 et seq., 9, 12; id. *Hellenism*, p. 3; G. Zuntz, *Greek words in the Talmud*, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 1956, pp. 129-140, who admits of Krauss' work that "this is a work which in many ways commands respect", but almost immediately goes on to say: "It would, however, be rash if the non-specialist, in consulting it, were to take his results for final and unquestionable, while in fact a highly alert scepticism is called for at every point" (p. 129). And he concludes his article with the comment: "The crying need is for critical editions of the Hebrew texts which would allow the student to discount their numberless corruptions, so that future studies could proceed from a safer basis. Krauss's book retains its value as a comprehensive collection of the relevant passages" (p. 140).

<sup>4</sup> G. Zuntz, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> E. Schürer, *GJV II*, 21907, pp. 57-84.

of Greek words relevant to the investigation into language relationships in the first century is drastically reduced, the following question is, then, what is the implication of the occurrence of Greek words in the rabbinical writings for the actual speaking of the language by the rabbis? In itself, the establishment of the former says nothing definite about the latter. Various Latin loan-words also occur in the same writings. This no more warrants the conclusion that the rabbis spoke Latin than that Mark or his informants spoke Latin, or his readers could speak or even understand it, simply because a considerable number of Latinisms occur in the Gospel of Mark. And one might wonder why, as appears from synoptical comparisons, Luke removed various Latinisms, without ascribing this to a greater or lesser knowledge of that language, whether spoken or written. In both the New Testament and the rabbinical writings, it is a question of true loan-words, i.e. words borrowed from Latin and transported into Hebrew or Greek in that form because they were derived from the official language of the ruling race. Little wonder then, that the Latinisms in the New Testament particularly are words and expressions connected with the subjects of army, government, justice, trade and traffic. The same can be said of the many Greek loan-words in the rabbinical writings. For example, a perusal of the examples given by Schürer, who confines himself to the Mishnah, shows that they are often connected with the above-mentioned fields, together with others which can be expected to have easily penetrated the native language during regular intercourse with Greek-speaking compatriots or foreigners and which pertain for instance to such subjects as clothing and the material from which it was made, household utensils and foodstuffs. It need hardly be added that in this field various Latin words had also penetrated the language.<sup>1</sup> Hence it may be said with certainty on the grounds of the Mishnah that many Greek words and concepts, pertaining to all sorts of subjects, had already penetrated the language of the country in the first half of the second century A.D., and of many it may well be assumed, that they had been assimilated in the language even before that time. However, it would be going too far to say, on the grounds of the occurrence of loan-words pertaining to the above-mentioned subjects, "that in the Mishnah we have very rich material which shows us the influence of Hellenism

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<sup>1</sup> E. Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 78 et seq.

in all spheres of life", that this large number of Greek and also Latin loan-words demonstrates "how it was the Hellenistic culture which had come to predominate in Palestine also", or that they provide a lively impression "of how completely in Palestine, at least in the second century A.D., occidental habits and customs had been assimilated".<sup>1</sup> In itself it is quite conceivable that Greek and Latin loan-words were used in these fields by people who were not at all influenced by Hellenistic culture and who even felt antipathetic, hostile towards it. As for our present subject, it is important to note that the vocabulary pertaining to these subjects in no way proves that all those who used those Greek words could also speak, write or even understand the Greek language.

Now the borrowing of Greek words is not limited to these fields. They are also to be found in others where they would not normally be expected. But if the same applies to Latin words and, for example, in addition to *ληστής* *sicarius* can also be distinguished in Hebrew, then that signifies no more than the use of *σικάριοι* in Acts 21:38 signifies anything about speaking a given language at that time.<sup>2</sup> Moreover various lists of loan-words sometimes prove to be composed of substantives only. Should the conclusion not be that the language was not really familiar? This conclusion has indeed been drawn on occasion: "It is remarkable that Greek verbs are missing in Aramaic, more remarkable even that Aramaic verbs were formed from Greek substantives; the Greek verbs, the life-blood of the other language, remained alien to the linguistic feeling of the Palestinians".<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, however, such a pronouncement can no longer be defended. It is true that the overwhelming number of substantives among the Greek loan-words is still remarkable, but in actual fact not so surprising. In all fields of ordinary day-to-day conversation, what were most needed were designations of persons and things. But various new investigations carried out in the years

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<sup>1</sup> E. Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 83; cf. A. Thumb, *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus*, 1901, p. 105: "Dass sich aber das jüdische Volk Palästinas trotz mancher Reaktionsbestrebungen in der Maccabäerzeit und in der Epoche des Talmud dem übermächtigen Cultureinfluss des Griechentums nicht völlig entziehen konnte, beweist die grosse Masse griechischer Wörter, welche in die Sprache der rabbinischen Schriften eingedrungen ist".

<sup>2</sup> E. Schürer, *op. cit.* p. 83: here the use of the Greek and Latin proper names is also discussed.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache*, 1896, p. 63, note 1.

since 1896, when Meyer made his pronouncement, have disproved his hypothesis that Greek verbs are lacking in Aramaic and consequently have also disproved his conclusion. The works of Lieberman, for instance, demonstrate clearly that this hypothesis is untenable. He may not have been the first to study these questions profoundly, but he did process the relevant material drawn from a very broad field in his exceptionally important books. Although at times the basis of certain of his constructions may be considered somewhat too narrow or too unsound, several of his postulations are practically unassailable, notwithstanding the fact that account must naturally be taken again and again of the period for which they obtain. In any case it can now no longer be maintained that the rabbis' knowledge of Greek was confined to substantives. If it is established that they sometimes quoted Greek proverbs and also Greek legislation and literature,<sup>1</sup> quoted orally or in writing Greek translations of the Bible,<sup>2</sup> and were even able to pass judgment on their language and style,<sup>3</sup> then the rabbis who did so must at least have been familiar with the Greek language in all its forms and truly not merely in that of borrowed substantives. And if they did so in their sermons delivered to a Jewish-Palestinian audience, the logical conclusion is that the audience understood that Greek for the main part. This provided of course the preacher did not merely use such citations to show off his knowledge of Greek and of the Greek world of thought and his audience were impressed without understanding much of what he said. Such things happen in all ages. Boswell, Johnson's biographer, tells the following anecdote: "A country Parson, who was remarkable for quoting scraps of Latin in his sermons, having died, one of his parishioners was asked how he liked his successor; "He is a very good preacher, (was his answer), but no *latiner*" ".<sup>4</sup> The use of Greek and quoting from Greek literature have at times been dismissed as ostentatious

<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, pp. 37 et seq., 144 et seq.; cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* IV, 1, 1928, p. 405: "Die Haggadisten verwandten griechische Mythen ebenso wie die Alexandersagen unbedenklich in ihren Vorträgen", for examples of this use see pp. 408 et seq.; however, cf. also G. Alon, *Kirjath Sepher*, *Bibliographical Quarterly of the Jewish National University Library* 20 (1943/44), p. 84<sup>1</sup>, 11.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 47 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 17 et seq.; however, cf. G. Alon, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, II, an Everyman Paperback 1960, p. 445, note 1.

demonstrations of a special knowledge, but Lieberman emphatically rejects this representation of the matter and hence the supposition that the audience understood nothing of it at all.<sup>1</sup> It made perfectly good sense that the rabbis quoted complete sentences from Greek proverbs, from documents, containing Greek legal regulations, from Greek literature and suchlike sources to illustrate their arguments—and this was the main point—for their audience understood them very well. “The rabbis spoke to the people in their language, and if in the midst of their Aramaic speeches they often inserted Greek words and expressions they had very good reasons for it”.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it is highly probable that many rabbis were completely familiar with Greek. From various statements in the rabbinical sources it also appears that on the whole the rabbis had no objection to using Greek, and from an incidental injunction can even be inferred what the actual situation in this matter was, also in Palestine. The general impression received from these pronouncements, however, is certainly not that the rabbis only reluctantly permitted the use of Greek and then only when practically forced to do so by actual circumstances. It is stated explicitly in the Mishnah that certain important prayers such as the Shema, the Shemoneh-Esreh and grace may be spoken in any language, though it is immediately added that certain formulas must be spoken in the sacred language, e.g. for the presentation of the first-fruits, for the halitsa and for certain blessings and anathemas.<sup>3</sup> The Palestinian Talmud contains the statement that a rabbi in Caesarea heard the Shema being recited in Greek.<sup>4</sup> It should be remembered, however, that Caesarea was a Hellenised town. What was possible there may be taken as testimony of norms which obtained in a certain part of the Jewish diaspora, albeit in the immediate vicinity of the centre of the Jewish country. What was perfectly natural in the diaspora was not so in Judea. Moreover if one considers that this took place in Caesarea in particular, probably in the fourth century A.D., it becomes obvious that one cannot use such a statement as an illustration of the use of Greek by Jews, for instance, in Jerusalem in the first

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<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, pp. 38 et seq., 60.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39; Lieberman emphasises the fact that the point at issue is not the Greek loan words which therefore were adopted in practice in Aramaic: “words which did not become part of the Aramaic”.

<sup>3</sup> *Sotah* VII:1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> TP *Sotah* VII, 21b.



century. And the same applies to what Lieberman says in connexion with the quotation of this account from the Palestinian Talmud about the use of Greek in street prayers even by very simple people.<sup>1</sup> Hence all that can be said is that according to Sotah VII:1 there was not the least objection to uttering many routine, oft-recited prayers in Greek.

Something similar also applies to the books of the Bible. True, in the above-quoted pronouncement about prayers certain sections of the Scripture are mentioned which may only be uttered in the sacred language,<sup>2</sup> and it is laid down that a man has not fulfilled his duty if he has read the Scroll of Esther in Aramaic or any other language. But one exception to the latter prescript is permitted: the scroll may be read in a foreign language by those who speak a foreign language.<sup>3</sup> That meant that this megilla could be read in Greek to Greek-speaking Jews from the diaspora, also when they visited Jerusalem, and hence, for example, to the multitude of Jews from many regions who are mentioned in Acts 2:5-11, or those in Acts 6:9 who are mentioned as belonging to the synagogues of the Freedmen, the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians.

The same tractate Megillah contains a pronouncement about the books of the Scripture: "The books (of Scripture) differ from phylacteries and *Mezuzahs* only in that the Books may be written in any language, while phylacteries and *Mezuzahs* may be written in the Assyrian writing (in Hebrew and in the 'square' characters) only. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: the Books, too, they have only permitted to be written in Greek".<sup>4</sup>

In this connexion is stated in the Palestinian Talmud: An investigation was carried out and it was discovered that the Thora could only be translated in a perfectly satisfactory manner in Greek. And in the same passage Aquila's Greek translation of the Bible indirectly met with the approval of the leading rabbis of his time, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua.<sup>5</sup> The precise meaning of the words of

<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, Greek, pp. 30 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Sotah VII:2.

<sup>3</sup> Megillah II:1.

<sup>4</sup> Megillah I:8 (translation of Danby).

<sup>5</sup> TP Meg. I, 71c, cf. Lieberman, Greek, pp. 17 et seq.; Str. B, IV, i, p. 413<sup>r</sup>; E. R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman period, I-VIII, 1953-1958, Vol. II, p. 124: the latter gives these facts under reference to Stenning in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., XXVI, p. 421, in connexion with "the amazing impression that Jews in Palestine were in

Megillah I:8 cannot easily be defined, but generally this dictum is believed to be very old, perhaps older than that of Yad. IV:5, 6, which is sometimes considered difficult to bring into harmony with Meg. I:8.<sup>1</sup> And R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua belong to the first half of the second century A.D. However, it is possible that such pronouncements primarily concerned the Jewish diaspora.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the testimonies given by a few patriarchs about the reading of the Greek translation of the Bible in the synagogues most likely refer to the diaspora. Justin states that the books of the Old Testament were translated into Greek, εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνήν, and that from that time the books were not confined to the Egyptians, but were to be found everywhere in the possession of the Jews, πανταχοῦ παρὰ πᾶσιν εἰσιν Ἰουδαίοις. This expression is so general, that it could also include Palestine, but the context suggests that Justin used it mainly to indicate the entire diaspora.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian says that at present the writings of the Bible, translated into Greek are still to be found in the library of Ptolemy in the Serapeum together with the original Hebrew text and goes on to say: But the Jews also read the scriptures in public. They pay a tax for this privilege; on Saturdays this ceremony can be attended everywhere. The latter, "vulgo aditur sabbatis omnibus", is phrased in very general terms, but probably he scarcely thought of Palestine in this connexion.<sup>4</sup>

Although it is therefore highly probable that those statements in Megillah were intended to refer to Palestine as well, it is not absolutely certain. The same obtains for a divorce decree which is mentioned elsewhere in the Mishnah and which, if it also applies to Palestine, indicates that Greek was used on various occasions in important documents. If a divorce decree is written in Hebrew and the names of the witnesses in Greek, if it is written in Greek and the names of the witnesses in Hebrew, if one witness signs in Hebrew

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general as hellenized in language as they were in architectural ornament and funerary symbols". In his view this throws much light on the fact that in the middle of the second century R. Simeon ben Gamaliel forbade the translation of the Pentateuch, except into Greek, a prohibition which R. Jochanan upheld a century later.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. Ginzberg, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Mischnah*, in *Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag D. Hoffmanns*, 1914, pp. 331-334.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Schürer, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 87 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Justin, *Apology I*, 31:4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 18:8, 9; cf. *Pseudo-just., Cohort. ad Graec.* 13.

and the other in Greek, or if it is signed by the writer and a witness, then it is valid.<sup>1</sup> It is practically certain that this dictum was also made with Palestine in mind, and perhaps in the first place. There it will certainly have happened that the two witnesses who had to sign a divorce decree spoke different languages, even more often than in the diaspora. The important point here is that the divorce decree itself was sometimes written in Greek.

Another dictum in the Mishnah proves that in some cases the knowledge of Greek was definitely passed on from one generation to the next by instructing the children in that language, notwithstanding this fact appears from the prohibition of the latter in a certain stage of history. The dictum reads: "During the war of Vespasian they forbade the crowns of the bridegrooms and the (wedding) drum. During the war of Titus (the Cambridge text reads: 'Quietus') they forbade the crowns of the brides and that a man should teach his son Greek. In the last war they forbade the bride to go forth in a litter inside the city, but our Rabbis permitted the bride to go forth in a litter inside the city".<sup>2</sup> If the citation of the name Quietus is correct, then this dictum definitely did apply to Palestine, for Lucius Quietus was a Roman general under Trajan who crushed the violent revolt of the Jews that broke out in many parts of the Roman Empire when the emperor advanced against the Parthians. And, says Eusebius, when he did the same in Mesopotamia by massacring a multitude of Jews, he was appointed procurator of Judea in reward for this success, ἡγεμὼν τῆς Ἰουδαίας διὰ τοῦτο καθίσταται.<sup>3</sup> Moreover this establishes rather closely the time when the prohibition was issued. The revolt took place in 117-118 A.D. From this prohibition it therefore appears that it was in no way uncommon among the Jews in Palestine that a man taught his son Greek, and if this was forbidden in 117, there is good reason to assume that the custom had been observed for some time, hence certainly in the last part of the first century A.D. as well. This would have happened even before then if Titus and not Quietus is referred to. Certain text-witnesses read קטיוס instead of קטיוס here. Often, however, objections have rightly been raised to this reading. Where mention is made at the beginning of Sotah IX:14 of the

<sup>1</sup> Gittin IX:8; cf. IX:6.

<sup>2</sup> Sotah IX:14.

<sup>3</sup> Eus., H.E. IV, 2:5; for this revolt see E. Schürer, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 647, 666 et seq.; H. Bietenhard, *Die Freiheitskriege der Juden*, pp. 69 et seq.

פּוֹלֶמוֹס אֶסְפִּסְיוֹס, the war (πόλεμος) of Vespasian, the reference is to the entire Jewish war of 66-70. Here Vespasian stands for the name of Rome, the world power which combatted the Jews in those days. It would be foolish thereafter to mention separately a פּוֹלֶמוֹס of Titus, as if that were an entirely different war. If, however, the war waged during the time of Quietus is meant, then it makes good sense that they are mentioned after each other and that פּוֹלֶמוֹס הָאֶחָד is meant to refer to the revolt of Barkochba, which was indeed the last war for the compilers of the Mishnah.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is unlikely that this decree could be back-dated to 70 A.D., it may be assumed on the grounds of this dictum that already in the first century there were some who taught their sons Greek. This passage likewise attests how certain events could so influence the feelings of the Jews that the radical prohibition of the instruction of children in Greek was a demonstration of the intense hatred of anything to do with the oppressor. "A measure which, if taken literally and carried out, would have radically affected life and driven the people into a ghetto."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, if this measure had been strictly enforced, every contact with Greek culture would have been rendered impossible. And this dictum is too hastily set at naught, if, as Lieberman does after quoting this measure from the time of Quietus, it is immediately followed by his comment: "But even this involved only instruction and only to children. Study was not enjoined".<sup>3</sup> True, no mention is made here of the father's own study of Greek and of Greek culture, but the enforcement of this measure would have made this impossible for the next generation. Perhaps this was the consideration that helped to induce dicta which did indeed distinguish between instruction in Greek and the study of Greek wisdom, hence dicta on which Lieberman can apparently call to support his view. An interpretation of this passage which is given in the Gemara of the TB does mention a distinction but is remarkably indefinite as to its application to the Sotah IX: 14 prohibition. This Gemara (49b) says, namely, that a distinction should be made between the Greek language and wisdom: it was only forbidden to learn the wisdom. But in the house of the patriarch it, Greek wisdom, was also permitted, because he had close relations

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Schürer. *op. cit.*, I, p. 667, note 59; Zahn, Einl. I, p. 43; H. Bietenhard, *Die Mischnah, Sota*, 1956, pp. 164 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Bietenhard, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 102.

with the government. This same communication can be found in the Tosefta, though in the form of permission to teach Greek: "Permission was granted to the house of Rabban Gamaliel to teach the children Greek owing to its relation with the (Roman) governor".<sup>1</sup> There is no trace here of a clear distinction between the teaching of children and personal study on this point of Greek wisdom, the former of which was at times forbidden and the latter never. It would be going too far to assume the conception of such a distinction already in the proclamation of the prohibition during the time of Quietus. Little value as proof can be ascribed to Lieberman's citation in this respect of a pronouncement of Rabbi Israel of Toledo, who indeed made this clear distinction. But he lived in the 13th century, and his formulation could have been influenced by the debate that was held on this point in the Middle Ages.

Hence there is no reason to doubt that the prohibition dating from the time of Quietus was extremely radical and that its consequences were fully appreciated. Nevertheless one does get the impression that such resolutions were made under the influence of events in very troubled times, that they were perhaps enforced more or less strictly for a short while, but that they soon had to be rescinded, or in any case qualified, since they could not be strictly maintained amidst relationships as they had developed and were still developing. It appeared already when Sotah IX:14 was quoted that the Mishnah itself states that a regulation drawn up under the force of circumstances was annulled, admittedly not the one from the time of Quietus about speaking Greek, but the one from the time of the revolt of Bar-Cochba about the bride. And the statement about the reading of Greek by the members of the House of Gamaliel is so explicitly coupled with the reason for it—owing to its relation with the government—that this permission would almost seem to have been given reluctantly, even unwillingly, and that the concession was inevitable in the given circumstances.

Somewhere in the Babylonian Talmud is said: "Ben Dama, the son of R. Ishmael's sister asked R. Ishmael: Is a man like myself who has mastered the whole Torah allowed to study Greek Wisdom? R. Ishmael applied the verse in Joshua (1:8) to him: . . . 'Thou shalt meditate therein (i.e. in the Torah) day and night', go and find a time when it is neither day nor night and study Greek Wisdom".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tos. Sotah XV:8.

<sup>2</sup> TB Menahoth 99b; translated by Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 100.

The Palestinian Talmud says something similar. There too a reference is made to Joshua 1:8. He quotes the Tosefta when asked about the reason for the prohibition in the days of Quietus: "R. Joshua was asked whether one is allowed to teach his son Greek<sup>1</sup> and he replied: "Let him teach him Greek at a time when it is neither day nor night, for it is written 'Thou shalt meditate therein day and night' " " (Josh. 1:8).<sup>2</sup>

The question is just how radical these pronouncements were intended to be. Lieberman makes little of these too, when he concludes after quoting them: "Thus, Greek education is forbidden inasmuch as it interferes with the study of the Law",<sup>3</sup> and elsewhere he even says: "Thus it is clearly stated that the study of Greek Wisdom is not forbidden *per se*, but only because it leads to the neglect of the study of the Torah".<sup>4</sup> One can hardly claim that the intention of these pronouncements was merely to warn against spending so much time on the study of Greek Wisdom that the study of the Law is neglected. If in both dicta the quotation of Joshua 1:8 (or Psalm 1:2) was seriously intended, then it can only mean the rejection of the study of Greek Wisdom. If the advice given is 'go and find time when it is neither day nor night and study Greek Wisdom', then the answer must be: There is no such hour and consequently that study is impossible if one is to continue to study the Law as prescribed. That is why others rightly infer from these pronouncements that at a certain time, probably the beginning of the second century, the campaign against the study of the Greek language and culture was initiated and that the possibility of this study was formulated in such a way that it amounted in practice to prohibition.<sup>5</sup>

But such a prohibition could not easily be enforced and so it almost inevitably was moderated. Perhaps this is why R. Abbahu says in the name of his teacher Jochanan: "A man is permitted to teach his daughter Greek for it serves her as an ornament".<sup>6</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup> As translated by Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 101. Str. B. IV:1, pp. 412 et seq. translates as follows: "Darf ein Mensch seinen Sohn Griechisch reden lehren?"

<sup>2</sup> Tos. Abodah Zarah 1:20; TP Peah I, 15c.

<sup>3</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Str. B. IV:1, p. 407; cf. also Bietenhard, *Die Mischnah*, Sota, 1956, p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> TP Peah I, 15c; Shabbath, VI, 7d, Sotah IX, 24c; cf. Lieberman, *Greek*, pp. 22 et seq.; G. Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 81 I, II.

then this Abbahu lived in Caesarea about 300, and he is known to have been sympathetically inclined towards the culture prevailing in his milieu. Hence it is not surprising that he it is who passed on this dictum of Jochanan. In one of the traditions of this dictum it is even said that another rabbi accused R. Abbahu of having falsely ascribed this dictum to his teacher because he wished to have his own daughter taught Greek. Such a tradition therefore can act as a warning against placing unlimited confidence in the reliability of all traditions concerning this delicate point, which the discussion on the Greek language and culture probably continued to be, and in particular against jumping too hastily to far-reaching conclusions about the situation in a given period.

Lieberman attaches great significance to a dictum of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, which occurs a couple of times in the Talmud in only slightly diverging wording. He speaks of a 'thousand young men in my father's house; five hundred of them studied Torah while the other five hundred studied Greek Wisdom'.<sup>1</sup> He quoted this passage at the beginning of his book entitled "Greek in Jewish Palestine" and comments: "This is first-hand evidence that an academy of Greek Wisdom existed in Jewish Palestine under the auspices of the Patriarch".<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere in the same book these words are reproduced again following on a quotation of the dictum saying that the House of Gamaliel was given permission to teach their children Greek. He introduces them thus: "Even more definite testimony is borne. . .".<sup>3</sup> He quotes them once more in a later work and on this occasion adds: "We have no reason to disbelieve this statement. Nobody would have invented this kind of a tradition, for there is no possible ground for such an invention by the Babylonian Rabbis. A rabbinic statement which is not in harmony with the general attitude of the Rabbis is, as a rule, quite trustworthy. We have here explicit testimony to the effect that the young men belonging to the House of the Patriarch who studied Greek Wisdom were numerically at least approximately equal to those who studied Torah, and whose numbers must have been considerable."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> TB Sotah 49b (and parallels).

<sup>2</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 104 f.; cf. W. L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity* 1944 (in: *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy*), pp. 30 et seq.

This statement of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel is indeed very significant. It could be taken to prove that already in the first century A.D. Greek wisdom was taught to a large number of young men in the centre of Palestinian Jewry. But in that case there would have to be not a single weak link in the chain of tradition mentioned for these words. One would have to trust that R. Juda († 299) passed it on correctly in the name of Samuel († 254), who quoted correctly the words of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel (± 140) and, finally, that this R. Simeon gave a correct description of the true state of affairs in his father's time.<sup>1</sup> Lieberman evidently leaves open the possibility of weak links. At times he believes there is apparent reason not to trust fully certain dicta, but in that case he does not think there is any reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement, because a rabbinic statement which is not in harmony with the general attitude of the Rabbis is, as a rule, completely trustworthy. This is usually a strong argument, but it is conceivable that a time came when the broad erudition in all fields in the circle of rabbis was spoken of with pride. Lieberman himself quotes dicta which show some resemblance to those of R. Simeon which, though containing no mention of Greek Wisdom, are obviously of a legendary nature. The number of students has swollen to hundreds of thousands, and indeed millions.<sup>2</sup> Is not the beginning of this stylisation of the numbers already clearly manifest in the dictum ascribed to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel? However, Lieberman does not entirely accept the veracity of this tradition of the numbers regarding either the thousand or the exact division into equal parts when he speaks of "numerically at least approximately equal", and of those who studied Greek Wisdom he says that their "number must have been considerable".<sup>3</sup> One reason why such large numbers are given could possibly be that after R. Simeon mentioned the thousand young men in the house of his father—"and out of all of them only I have remained here and the son of my father's brother in Asia"—his following words accentuate sharply the contrast: so few are left of so many during the persecution under Hadrian. Besides, this statement about the existence of open, mass instruction in Greek wisdom under the auspices of Gamaliel does not tally well with the information about permission being given to the house of Rabban Gamaliel to teach

<sup>1</sup> TB Baba Kamma 83a.

<sup>2</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 104, note 33.

<sup>3</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 105; cf. G. Alon, *op. cit.*, pp. 79<sup>1</sup>, 80<sup>1</sup>.



their children Greek because of their relations with the government. Here there is a latent suggestion that this permission to teach Greek was given as an exception because of their special position.

Moreover the argument that a rabbinic statement which is not in harmony with the general attitude of the rabbis is as a rule trustworthy can only be faultlessly applied if that 'general attitude' can be established with certainty. There is absolutely nothing to prove that the general attitude in this case was always the same in the centuries after Christ. For example, clear indications are to be found in the archeological data that no objection was made in the fourth century A.D. to inscriptions containing Greek texts or to representations of figures taken from the surrounding, non-Jewish world of thought, but that determined attempts were made a few centuries later to eradicate all traces of such aberrations. It is quite possible that in the first centuries changes took place in the general attitude of the Rabbis on the question of adjudging Greek language and culture and that in the light of their own general attitude they more or less coloured the facts from earlier times. And the more one seriously supports Lieberman's own comment that "the attitude of the Rabbis towards Greek education varied according to individuals, places and times",<sup>1</sup> the less practicable, in any case less sound, is the appeal to *the* general attitude of the rabbis.

Hence I believe it possible that statements boasting of the knowledge of Greek and Greek culture which are ascribed to rabbis who lived in the first or second century A.D. are sometimes influenced, at least in their wording, by the general attitude towards that knowledge in the century in which those statements were made. Similarly this might explain at times the weakening of the significance of certain earlier prohibitions. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that it is a rabbi of the fourth century who quotes the statement of R. Jochanan: "Studying of Greek was forbidden on account of the informers".<sup>2</sup> When making this statement, R. Jochanan could possibly have been thinking of the apostate who is handed down to us under the name of "Acher" in the rabbinical writings, and so it could refer to an actual situation in his time.<sup>3</sup> But even then there remains the possibility that such statements were

<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, p. 16, note 11.

<sup>2</sup> TP Sotah IX, 24c; the same, TP Peah I, 15c.

<sup>3</sup> Str. B. IV:1, p. 407; cf. Lieberman, *Greek*, pp. 24 et seq.; *Hellenism*, p. 101.

gratefully seized upon in later times in order to demonstrate that the prohibition on teaching Greek was only issued with a view to certain exceptional cases, and that consequently they in no way testified to a radical condemnation of the use of the Greek language and of Greek culture.

Another very significant question is the extent of the Rabbis' knowledge of Greek culture. The term for it is 'Greek Wisdom', **חֵכְמָה יוֹוִיט**. What did this concept comprise? Nowhere is that exactly explained. Did this term signify the knowledge of Greek science, art, literature—thus of Greek culture in all its aspects—or merely a certain superficial knowledge of a few expressions of it which were needed in a particular profession or in actual situations in everyday life? That statement about permitting Rabban Gamaliel and his house to have their children taught Greek would seem to point in the latter direction. To be precise, the motive given in it is that they had relations with the government. One could also say that all they strictly needed was sufficient knowledge of Greek and Greek culture to maintain those relations. If, however, validity is granted to the statement of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel that in the house of his father five hundred of the thousand young men applied themselves to the study of Greek Wisdom, then this implies a much broader knowledge of the Greek language and culture: "it comprised information which could help the individual in his association with the educated Hellenistic circles of Palestine. The Rabbis had therefore a Jewish channel through which Hellenistic culture could be conveyed to them if they wanted to avail themselves of it".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the motive of the permissibility of the daughter's Greek points in another direction: "for it serves her as an ornament". For young ladies with social status it was very important that they knew how to move easily in upper circles and to carry on a polite, cultured conversation with all the people they met there.

Now in the rabbinical sources are certain indications that in later times many rabbis were acquainted with all sorts of data from Greek literature and sometimes Greek science as well.<sup>2</sup> But the rabbis make no mention of any Greek writer from whom they derived such data, unless perhaps Homer. It is not quite certain that the latter really is mentioned in the Mishnah. If not, then allowance must be made for the possibility that the rabbis were not acquainted at first

<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Str. B. IV:1, pp. 405, 408-410, a-e.

hand through personal study with data which were originally to be found in diverse works of Greek writers, but that they acquired knowledge of such material from oral tradition or perhaps from contemporary compilations of these writings. Hence much depends on the interpretation of the passage in which Homer is perhaps mentioned. It reads: <sup>1</sup> "The Sadducees say, We cry out, against you, O ye Pharisees, for ye say, 'The Holy Scriptures render the hands unclean,' (and) 'The writings of Hamiram do not render the hands unclean'. Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai said, Have we naught against the Pharisees save this!—for lo, they say, 'The bones of an ass are clean, and the bones of Johanan the High Priest are unclean?' They said to him, As is our love for them so is their uncleanness—that no man make spoons of the bones of his father or mother. He said to them, Even so the Holy Scriptures: as is our love for them so is their uncleanness; (whereas) the writings of Hamiram which are held in no account do not render the hands unclean". Opinion diverges widely on the text and interpretation of this passage. Obviously Danby does not distinguish the name Homer in the Hebrew text in the translation given above. Neither does Lisowsky. He chooses for ספרי מירון 'die Bücher Meron', though in his commentary he states: "The word is contained in the forms מירון, מירן, מירם, מירן, מרין which may be preceded by a ה. This ה has clearly been interpreted by many text-witnesses as the article. Many commentators, however, consider it part of the word and interpret it, after substitution of מ by ס, as המרוס, 'Homeros' ". He says that the reading המרוס occurs in Fragment b, but that here the vocalisator obviously took the ה to be an article, and furthermore that the thesis that the reference in this passage is to the books of Homer is supported by TP Sanh. 28a: "Like, for instance, the books of Ben Sira and Ben La'ana; (if however one reads) in the books of Homer (ספרי המרוס), (then it is) as if he read a letter".<sup>2</sup> Thus Danby translates both times in Yadaim IV:6: „the writings of Hamiram", and gives as variants: Hamiros, Miras, Miram, with the commentary: "It is variously explained as 'books of the heretics (Minim)' or 'the books of Homer' ".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yadaim IV:6, as translated by Danby.

<sup>2</sup> G. Lisowsky, *Die Mishna, Jadajim*, 1956, p. 74 and *Textkritischer Anhang zur Stelle*, p. 91; for comment on the variants, see also R. Gordis, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1948, p. 359, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 1954, p. 784.

And so we find diverse variations in the textual interpretations of the word which perhaps signifies Homer. The absence of the ה in several variants need not be accounted a decisive argument against the interpretation of this word as 'Homer', for examples of aphaeresis are not wanting in many other words borrowed from the Greek. Hence the answer to the question whether Homer is mentioned here or not cannot be given exclusively on the grounds of arguments pertaining to textual criticism, but consideration certainly will also have to be paid to the interpretation of the term in the context in which it stands.

In the first place I believe there can be no doubt that Yadaim IV:6, the attack of the Sadducees on the Pharisees and the resultant reaction, is linked up with what immediately goes before. In IV:5 the subject of discussion is the uncleanness of the Holy Scriptures: "The (Aramaic) version that is in Ezra and Daniel renders the hands unclean. If an (Aramaic) version (contained in the Scriptures) was written in Hebrew, or if (Scripture that is in) Hebrew was written in an (Aramaic) version or in Hebrew script, it does not render the hands unclean. (The Holy Scriptures) render the hands unclean only if they are written in the Assyrian character, on leather and in ink". This is followed immediately by the remark of the Sadducees. The point at issue is which book actually does render the hands unclean. The uncleanness of the Holy Scriptures is assumed in various passages in the Mishnah, although nowhere is any reason given for this.<sup>1</sup> Since the canonical books render unclean, the Aramaic parts of Ezra and Daniel fall in that category. But obviously then translation of the Hebrew parts of the Scriptures into Aramaic and of Aramaic parts into Hebrew do not render the hands unclean. What does render unclean is specified once more at the end of Yad. IV:5: "(The Holy Scriptures) render the hands unclean only if they are written in the Assyrian character, on leather and in ink". It is to this ruling, that the Sadducees object, and in the following discussion the *reductio ad absurdum* is used. The Sadducees remonstrate with their opponents that according to this ruling, which apparently meets with the approval of the Pharisees, the Holy Scriptures render the hands unclean but not the books of 'Homer'. Whether or not 'Homer' is taken to be the reading here, the books in question must form a glaring and extreme contrast to

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<sup>1</sup> Lisowsky, *inter alia*, discusses this problem, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 et seq.

the Holy Scriptures, and according to the Sadducees they would be expected to be the first to render the hands unclean. Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai's answer to this is another extreme contrast which could be made on the argument of another ruling of uncleanness, namely that only the remains of man render unclean. If it were applied consistently, it would mean that the bones of an ass are clean but those of Johanan the High Priest unclean.

From this context it follows that the books in question must form an extreme contrast with the Holy Scriptures. That is why they have sometimes been taken for heretical writings. Honeyman posited that they were writings of Jewish Christians, and his reading of the Hebrew word is a transcription of μέρος, sect, party.<sup>1</sup> The contra-argument rightly put forward is that in the aforesaid passage TP Sanh 28a it is said of these books that reading them is like reading a letter. R. Akiba could never have said anything like that about heretical books. And Honeyman's explanation of the mild judgment on these books in this passage is too far-fetched when he maintains that R. Akiba would have been placed in an awkward position if he pronounced a radical ban on the books of this μέρος, for then he would simultaneously have assailed the citations from the Scripture contained in these books. Besides it is clearly stated elsewhere that, when it was a question of combatting heretical writings, the rabbis did not hesitate to burn together with them the Holy Name mentioned in them.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it is unlikely that the reference here is to heretical writings of Jewish or Christian origin. The question is then, of course, whether the reading of books such as those of Homer was considered less harmful, so that they could be said to read like a letter. And yet the writings of Homer are full of the names of idols. By reading these books, did one not violate the explicit injunction of the Law; 'and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth' (Ex. 23:13)? This injunction was one of the arguments employed by Friedmann to demonstrate that the rabbis could not possibly have permitted the reading of the books of Homer. Against this Lieberman urged that it was not forbidden to mention the names of idols if the aim was to ridicule their adoration and that the Jews who read Homer looked on his myths as fairy-tales

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<sup>1</sup> A. M. Honeyman, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1947, pp. 151 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Tos. Shab. XIII:5

and were amused by this worship of idols.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the contrast with heretics in their own circles was probably felt more acutely and intensely than that with a world of thought far removed from their own. The same passage Tos Shab. XIII:5 clearly hints at such when the heathens are excused in a sense because they do not know the true God, but not the heretic because he knows the Lord but denies him. Hence it is possible that the reading of purely heathen books was tolerated more readily than that of heretical works.

If there is indeed some question of the books of Homer in the above-mentioned passages and in certain others,<sup>2</sup> one might possibly expect manifest traces of the reading of these books in the rabbinical sources. This would mean that some indication could be found of quotations from the Greek text of Homer, for there is nothing whatsoever to prove that the books of Homer were translated into Hebrew. Such quotations of a Greek Homer, however, are entirely lacking. What can be found here and there is an expression strongly reminiscent of Homer. And the Sirens and Centaurs appear to have been known. In the Midrash, for example, it is said of the speed of Azael's tread: he was wont to walk on ears of corn and they did not break. This is almost literally what Homer said of the half-divine horses of Erichtonius: ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀνθερίκων καρπὸν θεόν οὐδὲ κατέκλων.<sup>3</sup> But this still does not prove that Homer is quoted directly here, for in the ancient world this writer had long been quoted on all sorts of occasions. There must have been many who knew large sections of his books by heart and often recited them. Diverse striking expressions in them were probably everywhere in circulation, and those who used them were perhaps sometimes scarcely conscious of quoting Homer. Therefore the rabbis' use of a sentence which is strongly reminiscent of Homer is no proof that they had read the books of this writer in Greek, and the use of an expression or a name is even less acceptable as proof of the same. It is highly likely—and even probable—that their acquaintance with facts from Homer had been acquired through various other channels, whether oral or in writing. Probably they gladly used any pithy sayings they came across. Certainly they repeatedly had the opportunity of hearing all sorts of things of this nature in their conversation with

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<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, pp. 111 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Lieberman, *Hellenism*, pp. 110 et seq., mentions two more.

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad* XX, 227.

highly Hellenised Jews, or of reading about them in the writings of such persons.

The direct use of the books of Homer by the Rabbis is therefore not easy to prove. Now it is quite possible that, even if 'Homer' must be read in the aforesaid passages, the expression ספרי המירס must really be taken in the broader sense of Greek literature in general. The expression אפיקורוס, for example, does not particularly signify an adherent of the doctrine of Epicurus, not even of Greek philosophy in general, but is a sort of collective designation for sceptics, unbelievers. Similarly the mention of the books of Homer need not signify that only this writer was in mind and that hence quotations from his books especially are to be expected in the works of the Rabbis.

Nevertheless the lack of indications of a direct use of the Iliad and the Odyssey in the rabbinical writings makes it less certain that in Yad. IV:6, for example, the books of Homer are really intended. Little wonder, then, that divergence persists in the preferences for a certain reading of the text and in its interpretations.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed difficult to say with certainty what the original reading of the word in Yad. IV:6 is and also whether it should really be read as 'Homer'. Several of the various interpretations must be accounted less plausible than that of 'the books of Homer' and, in fact, not a single one that is more acceptable and fitting in the context. But even if this negative consideration tips the balance slightly in favour of the 'Homer' interpretation, it is well to bear in mind the caution contained in what Lisowsky established about Yad. IV:6: "Despite all efforts, a satisfactory interpretation of the factually clear expression which can only mean books from the uncanonical and profane literature, has so far not been found".<sup>2</sup>

The result of this scrutiny of the data in the rabbinical writings is, firstly, the ascertainment that in some periods a larger or smaller number of rabbis were acquainted to a greater or lesser degree with the Greek language. Here, however, the chronology is of great importance, for it appears here and there that the attitude to the use of Greek underwent changes at times, for example during the revolt under Quietus. But this pronouncement is one of the most important for our investigation, because precisely from that pro-

<sup>1</sup> Gordis, *op. cit.*, pp. 359 et seq., mentions various theories; see also Lieberman, *Hellenism*, pp. 105 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Lisowsky, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

hibition it appears that in the opening years of the second century A.D. and hence very probably already in the first century it happened at times that a father taught his son Greek.

Just how deep the knowledge of Greek went, is not always clear. The use of loan words does not mean much in this respect, even less the fact that according to several passages in the Mishnah the rabbis were very well acquainted with the Greek characters, for they repeatedly used their form to describe a certain figure.<sup>1</sup> And similarly it is not highly significant that according to a single tradition in the Mishnah Greek characters were engraved on the Offer Chest in the temple.<sup>2</sup> Of much greater importance is it that the rabbis sometimes quoted Greek proverbs, also Greek translations of the Bible, and that some of them could evidently give expert commentary on their language and style. Rabbis capable of doing this must have been very familiar with the Greek language.

It is not certain that they had drawn their knowledge of Greek sayings from reading the works of Greek writers. If this is not the case, then the rabbis must often have encountered people from whom they could have heard such Greek sayings, or have regularly read works of writers from their own circle who were acquainted with parts of the Greek literature. Howsoever this may be, it appears that in certain periods many rabbis had no objections to the use of Greek and an acquaintance with Greek wisdom, nor to reciting certain prayers and reading the Holy Books in Greek.

So these data from the rabbinical writings are not lacking in significance for the investigation into the knowledge of Greek among the Jewish Christians of the first century. The chronological problem, however, is rather thorny. That is why we have concentrated our attention on certain dicta from the Mishnah, since chronologically it is closest to the first century. Nevertheless it should be borne in mind that these dicta mainly speak of the knowledge of Greek in certain circles, and this does not prove much about other groups. If it is stated that special permission was granted to the house of Gamaliel to teach their children Greek, one receives the impression that a knowledge of Greek was the rule mainly among the upper classes. Then it is quite possible that the middle classes all too eagerly imitated the customs of the upper ones in this respect and

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<sup>1</sup> Menahoth VI: 3; Kelim XX: 7; XXVIII: 7; Middoth III: 1.

<sup>2</sup> Shekalim III: 2.



that a knowledge of Greek and an ability to participate in conversation on matters concerning Greek culture became a sort of criterion of social status. Then again it is quite possible that some of the audience understood the rabbis perfectly well if they interspersed their sermons in the synagogues with Greek sayings or trains of thought. Whether such allusions to the Greek language and culture were not lost on many of their audience—whether there was any difference between the towns and the rural areas in this respect—whether only a few rabbis could or were able to make such allusions—whether there were many who spoke Greek as well as an educated Jew in England speaks literary English<sup>1</sup>—these are in my opinion questions which cannot be answered with absolute certainty from the data in the rabbinical sources. And yet the answers to questions like these would be of great importance to the investigation which is our prime concern. Only then could be said with any degree of certainty how much Greek the Jewish Christians of the first century could be generally assumed to have known.

### C. JOSEPHUS

The works of Josephus are of great importance to this investigation, for he was the man who, because of his parentage, his eventful life, his contacts with many circles of his compatriots and the Romans, understood the conditions and relationships in his country better than most. Moreover he lived and wrote precisely in that period about which we seek special information. Now the question is whether the information he can provide is always reliable. His reports about certain subjects are probably more or less influenced by his special position among his own people and as regards the Romans. Whether this obtains for the particular subject under question will have to be determined at times.

The first impression given by the scattered comments made by Josephus on the language problems is that Aramaic was the language most familiar to the Jewish people in the first century A.D. and hence might be termed their mother tongue. Josephus states that during the siege of Jerusalem he passed on a message from Titus ἐβραϊζων, and according to another passage that is τῇ πατρίῳ

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<sup>1</sup> Lieberman, *Greek*, p. 30.

γλώσση.<sup>1</sup> Of course one might query whether ἐβραϊζων really signifies 'speaking Aramaic' and hence must be taken as the mother tongue of the Palestine Jews of that time or whether it means 'speaking Hebrew'. In view of the comment given above on this point (pp. 33 et seq.), it does not seem necessary to discuss this question in detail, since the main issue here is a different one—the degree of the knowledge of Greek. In any case, the comments of Josephus would seem to imply that the mother tongue of the Jews in Palestine in his time was not Greek but a Semitic language. However, it is not certain if Josephus meant that they had to be spoken to in their Semitic mother tongue since they did not understand Greek and hence Titus, for example, was completely unable to speak to them directly. Sometimes it would seem as though this was nevertheless possible. Somewhere Josephus says: "Titus, conscious that the preservation or destruction of the city vitally affected himself, while pressing the siege, did not omit to urge the Jews to reconsider their policy. Blending active operations with advice, and aware that speech is often more effectual than arms, he not only personally exhorted them to seek salvation by the surrender of the city, already practically taken, but also delegated Josephus to parley with them in their native tongue, thinking that possibly they might yield to the expostulation of a fellow-countryman".<sup>2</sup> From this it can be inferred that Titus himself spoke to the rebel Jews and moreover believed there was a very special reason for having Josephus speak to them in their mother tongue: perhaps they would be more inclined to listen to a fellow-countryman than to him. This could mean that Titus could have spoken directly to the Jews himself, but that he considered it particularly important that extra pressure should be put on the Jews by having a fellow-countryman speak to them in their own language. Other passages similarly suggest that Titus spoke personally to the rebels: "Titus, yet more

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<sup>1</sup> B.J. VI: 96; V: 361; cf. Alexander Roberts, *Greek the language of Christ and his Apostles*, 1888, pp. 449 et seq. Wrongly, I believe, he opines that the use of Aramaic speech in this instance can be explained by the special circumstances: "Nothing could have been more natural in the circumstances in which the Jews were now placed, than that they should have fallen back, as much as possible, on the employment of their national language . . . There was a violent recoil from all that savoured of Gentilism, and this feeling would be sure to display itself with regard to language as in other particulars".

<sup>2</sup> B.J. V: 360, 361.

deeply distressed, again upbraided John and his friends".<sup>1</sup> Later, however, it is said of this speech: "The message from Caesar being transmitted through Josephus. . ." (τοῦ Ἰωσήπου διαγγέλλοντος).<sup>2</sup> In itself this verb need not imply that Josephus translated Titus' speech. Often enough it is used without any suggestion whatsoever of translation and hence does not automatically mean here: Josephus must interpret his speech.<sup>3</sup> But the likelihood that transmission by translation is intended here is strengthened by the use of this verb elsewhere in connexion with translation: τὰ τε τοῦ Καίσαρος διήγγελλεν ἑβραΐζων.<sup>4</sup> Moreover in another passage is stated explicitly that, when addressing the rebel Jews, an interpreter stood beside Titus, τὸν ἑρμηνέα παραστησάμενος.<sup>5</sup> Finally Josephus relates that only he was able to understand the deserters and so pass on the information obtained from them.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Josephus touches on this language problem, particularly in connexion with his description of the Jewish war and of his and the Jews' relation with Titus. It would therefore be of interest to know how fluently and comprehensively Titus spoke Greek. Theoretically it is also possible that the difficulties he encountered in communicating with the Jews were due in part to *his* limited command of spoken Greek. Josephus says not a word about this, but from another source it is known that for some of his predecessors at least Greek was an acquired language. Some of them had an excellent command of it. Suetonius reports of Claudius that he applied himself assiduously to the Graeca studia and whenever the opportunity arose, proclaimed his love of that language and its excellence. When a barbarian spoke with him in Greek and in Latin, he said to him: "I see you are an adept in both our languages (cum utroque sermone nostro sis paratus)". And when he recom-

<sup>1</sup> B.J. VI:124.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. VI:129.

<sup>3</sup> Schürer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 85, note 242; cf., however, Vita 98; Luke 9:60; Acts 21:26; Romans 9:17; Diogn. 11:5.

<sup>4</sup> B.J. VI:96.

<sup>5</sup> B.J. VI:327.

<sup>6</sup> Contra Ap. I:49; A. Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 450 et seq., argues that if there is any question here of συνίεν, then it does not refer to understanding the language, but to knowing the nature of the information given by the turncoats. His opinion is therefore that Josephus really means: I alone "had intelligence of" or "knew the nature of" their communications. In my view it is not likely that the συνίεν should be thus interpreted in this passage: Liddell and Scott gives several passages for συνίημι where the meaning is 'to understand', 'comprehend a language other than one's own'.

mended Achaia to the Senators, he said it was a province that was dear to him, *gratam sibi provinciam communium studiorum commercio*, and many times he replied to its envoys in long speeches. He often also spoke *pro tribunali* in Homeric stanzas. And, finally, he himself wrote histories and books in Greek entitled *Tyrrhenicon* and 8 entitled *Carchedoniacon*.<sup>1</sup> From this statement made by Suetonius it appears that Claudius had a great love for and interest in Greek and also that he spoke it very fluently. That he was able to reply to the envoys from a Greek province in a long speech in Greek is probably the meaning of the sentence which follows directly on Suetonius' statement that the province of Achaia was dear to Claudius: *Ac saepe in senatu legatis perpetua oratione respondit*. Holland's translation of this sentence is therefore: "and many a time he answered their ambassadors in the senate with a long and continued oration in Greek".<sup>2</sup>

Suetonius also relates of Augustus that he energetically applied himself to Greek studies, that he excelled in them, being instructed by able teachers. After saying something about which teachers he had for various subjects, he adds however that Augustus could not speak Greek fluently and never hazarded a written composition in that language: *non tamen, ut aut loqueretur expedite, aut componere aliquid auderet*. If circumstances required such, he drew up his composition in Latin and had someone else translate it (here the meaning is of course into Greek). Even though Suetonius thereafter repeats that he read authors in both languages, and even though it appears from this section as a whole that Augustus was keenly interested in Greek language and literature, he clearly says of this emperor that he could not speak Greek fluently and had not enough confidence in his knowledge of the language to attempt composing any piece of writing directly in Greek himself.<sup>3</sup>

Having established that Suetonius assumed that Claudius knew more Greek than Augustus, one might conclude that there was a gradual increase in the emperors' familiarity with this language. But of course nothing definite can be said about a steadily increasing knowledge. It can also be inferred from Suetonius' remarks that certain emperors in particular were known to have an interest in

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Vita Claudii*, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius, *History of Twelve Caesars*, Translated by Philemon Holland (Anno 1606), edited by J. H. Freese, 1930, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius, *Aug.* 89.

and love for Greek language and literature. Others possibly devoted less time and thought to them. In any case it appears very clearly from Suetonius' remarks on Augustus that, even when there was no lack of attention, application and love for the language and literature, the emperors still found it very difficult to speak Greek. Hence it is very possible that Titus was anything but a fluent speaker of Greek and that the difficulties arising in his talks with the Jewish rebels were definitely not due merely to an inadequate knowledge of Greek among his Jewish audience, but also in himself.

Hence although Aramaic was, according to Josephus, the native language of the Jews in his days, the language with which they were most familiar, this does not imply he assumed them to be completely ignorant of Greek. In this respect, what he imparts in the concluding chapters of the *Antiquities* is remarkable. There he speaks of his own knowledge of Greek and of the way he acquired it. He also hints at just how familiar his fellow-countrymen were with the Greek language. He says, *inter alia*: "And now I take heart from the consummation of my proposed work to assert that no one else, either Jew or Gentile, would have been equal to the task, however willing to undertake it, of issuing so accurate a treatise as this for the Greek world. For my compatriots admit that in our Jewish learning I far excel them. I have also laboured strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation. For our people do not favour those persons who have mastered the speech of many nations, or who adorn their style with smoothness of diction, because they consider that not only is such skill common to ordinary freemen but that even slaves who so choose may acquire it. But they give credit for wisdom to those alone who have an exact knowledge of the Law and who are capable of the meaning of the Holy Scriptures. Consequently, though many have laboriously undertaken this training, scarcely two or three have succeeded, and have forthwith reaped the fruit of their labours".<sup>1</sup> This is the translation of *Ant.* XX: 262-265 by Louis H. Feldman in the Classical Library edition. But the fact that he not only gives a few variants in this part of the Greek text, but also offers an alternative translation to certain passages, demonstrates that it is not easy to determine exactly what Josephus meant with

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<sup>1</sup> *Ant.* XX: 262-265.

these words. That becomes even more manifest in the wide divergence between the various translations of some words and expressions, sometimes precisely when they are of specific significance for our present subject.

Towards the conclusion of the *Antiquities* Josephus asserts that in writing this work he performed a great feat, one which no one, whether Jew or Gentile, could emulate. What exactly was the essence of this feat? Feldman translates: 'of issuing so accurate a treatise as this for the Greek world' (τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην οὕτως ἀκριβῶς εἰς Ἑλλήνας ἐξενεγκεῖν). Does this mean that Josephus prides himself on the accuracy of his historiography and that the Greeks would not find a more accurate account of the events than in his work? If so, then these words would not be directly relevant to our subject, apart from his emphatic assertion that he was capable of communicating this narrative to the Greeks in their own language. Others, however, interpret these words differently, as appears from their translations. Clementz, for example, translates these words as follows: "that even with the best will no one else, whether Jew or foreigner, would have been capable of reproducing the content of this work so faithfully in the Greek language".<sup>1</sup> And in his article on The Essenes, M. Friedländer translates: "no one else, whether Jew or not, would have been able to render the contexts in Greek with the same accuracy".<sup>2</sup> Here, therefore, the ἀκριβῶς is not related to the historiography of Josephus, but to his proficiency in Greek. Hence Josephus is supposed to have said: no one could have reproduced the content of this work so faithfully, so accurately in Greek as I have done. It would seem to me, however, that this interpretation is not the most plausible one. I believe it is not correct to translate the ἀκριβῶς εἰς Ἑλλήνας ἐξενεγκεῖν in that sense. A better interpretation is probably 'issuing so accurate a treatise as this for the Greek world'. Indeed it is probable that Josephus proudly established at the same time that he did so in excellent Greek, so that the Greek world could be quite satisfied with it, but this was not what he wanted to emphasise primarily in these words.

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Clementz, *Des Flavius Josephus Jüdische Altertümer*, 1959, II Band, pp. 676 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> M. Friedländer, *Les Esséniens*, *Revue des Études Juives*, Tome Quatrième, Paris 1887, p 187.

Nevertheless his following words indicate that this was in his mind. First he says that he far excelled his compatriots in Jewish learning (κατὰ τὴν ἐπιχώριον καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν παιδείαν).<sup>1</sup> Then he goes on: "I have also laboured strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry, after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation".<sup>2</sup> The general purport of these words of Josephus is clear: he has taken great pains to acquire a thorough knowledge of Greek, even though certain factors impeded rather than helped him. Although the general significance of this pronouncement is not uncertain, some elements in it are anything but clear. In the first place it is not quite certain whether the words 'to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry' properly reflect Josephus' intention (τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων καὶ ποιητικῶν μαθημάτων-μετασχεῖν). The alternative translation given by Feldman for 'prose' is 'learning'. Moreover in two manuscripts 'καὶ ποιητικῶν μαθημάτων' is omitted and several interpreters prefer the shorter text. They then relate the remaining words 'τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν γραμμάτων-μετασχεῖν' entirely to Josephus' strenuous occupation with his studies of the Greek language. Clementz, for example, translates: "thus I have also occupied myself exhaustively with the Greek language";<sup>3</sup> Sanday: "I also did my best to obtain a knowledge of Greek";<sup>4</sup> Friedländer "I made myself familiar with the Greek language".<sup>5</sup> However, these words have not always been related to the learning of the Greek language, as is evidenced by the translation of Williamson, who appears to have taken the shorter version of the text as starting point but translates it thus: "to obtain the learning of the Greeks".<sup>6</sup>

My opinion is that the shorter text, without 'καὶ ποιητικῶν μαθημάτων', was probably the original one and that in this part of the sentence Josephus wished to convey that he had worked hard to learn the Greek language. This harmonises better with the following part in which he says that, because of certain circumstances, he always had difficulty with precision in the pronunciation. He achieved much as regards the knowledge of the language, because

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vita 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. XX:263.

<sup>3</sup> H. Clementz, *op. cit.*, p. 677.

<sup>4</sup> The Expositor, vol. vii, p. 98, quoted in A. Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

<sup>5</sup> M. Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>6</sup> G. A. Williamson, *The World of Josephus*, 1964, p. 260.

he expended great energy on acquiring it, but he never succeeded in mastering a good, precise pronunciation of that acquired Greek.

There is also divergence of opinion about what follows immediately on the πολλά ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν: 'τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβών'. I believe that the translation which makes good sense and is the most obvious one is: after having gained a knowledge of (Greek) grammar. Feldman, whose translation this is, gives as alternative: 'after acquiring practice in writing'. The first translation is, I believe, the most plausible one. He was only able to gain proficiency in the Greek language because he had acquired a thorough proficiency in the grammar of that language, he had become completely familiar with it.<sup>1</sup>

Shutt's opinion about these words is entirely different. He believes that the literal translation of this participial clause is: "having memorized grammatical experience". In his view ἀναλαβών can hardly mean anything other than 'having memorized', and supports his assertion by referring to Liddell and Scott, new edition. Now it does mention certain passages in which ἀναλαμβάνω means 'to learn by rote', but also many other meanings of this verb.

Furthermore Shutt believes that "the participle (ἀναλαβών) is used to describe an action subsequent to that of the main verb ἐσπούδασα ('I took pains')". Such a usage is in his view not unheard of in earlier Greek and is found elsewhere in Josephus. (Ant. XX: 204, διαφθείρας). The first postulation is quite correct: sometimes the Aorist can indeed designate an action which follows that of the main verb. As for the second, the passage in Josephus mentioned here by Shutt, Ant. XX, 204, cannot be accounted an example of it: Albinus ensured the εἰρηνεύεσθαι in the land by exterminating most of the *sicarii*.

Shutt translates ἀναλαβών as follows: "...and thus (later I memorized). . ." and so his interpretation is "What Josephus intended to convey is that he studied Greek literature, prose and poetry, and by that means mastered and committed to memory the rules of grammar and syntax which he there found illustrated. This is precisely what would be necessary for anyone proceeding to the written composition of a language hitherto only used in con-

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<sup>1</sup> Clementz' translation is: "und ihre grammatischen Regeln gründlich erlernt", *op. cit.*, p. 677; Sanday: "by practising myself in the grammar", in Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 447; Friedländer: "et j'en ai étudié à fond les règles," *op. cit.*, p. 187.



versation, for in conversation inadequate grammar and syntax may pass muster, but not in composition".<sup>1</sup>

This translation and interpretation are not plausible in my opinion. The meaning 'to learn by rote' does not accord at all well with grammatical experience. Moreover, if the application of the participium of the Aorist to an action preceding the main verb of the words makes good sense, then this is preferable to relating it to a subsequent action. Besides more and clearer examples from Josephus would have to be given than Shutt does. Finally, the τὴν before γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν can be explained better if these words refer to an action that precedes the main verb rather than one which follows it.

Josephus then goes on to assert that he never attained perfect precision in the pronunciation of Greek. And he says why: the πατήριος συνήθεια prevented him from doing so. The significance and interpretation of these words has similarly given rise to divergence of opinion, which again is to be found in Feldman. He translates: "...although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation", but for 'the habitual use of my native tongue' he gives as alternative 'the usages of our nation'.<sup>2</sup> It is this alternative translation that I wish to advocate. Liddell and Scott gives various examples of the translation 'the customary use of language', but then either a genitive or another further qualification of the word συνήθεια is always added, whence it is manifest that reference is made to the use of the language. Moreover, the παρ' ἡμῶν γὰρ following immediately on συνήθεια indicates that now there follows the explanation of the native habit that was responsible for Josephus' less precise pronunciation of Greek.

According to Josephus, the persons not favoured by his people are those 'who have mastered the speech of many nations, or who adorn their style with smoothness of diction' (... τοὺς πολλῶν ἐθνῶν διάλεκτον ἐκμαθόντας καὶ γλαφυρότητι λέξεων τὸν λόγον ἐπικομψεύοντας...), for all freemen, and even slaves can become

<sup>1</sup> R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus*, 1961, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Zahn, *op. cit.*, I, p. 44, prefers the former translation, but most translators seem to prefer the latter: Clementz, *op. cit.*, p. 677 "die Sitte meiner Heimat"; Sanday, in Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 447: "native habit"; Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 187 "les mœurs de mon pays"; Roberts believes that "Josephus is referring to the Hebraistic Greek to which he was accustomed in his native country", *op. cit.*, p. 77. This is definitely not correct.

accomplished in that if they wish. High regard, on the contrary, is only felt for those "who have an exact knowledge of the Law and who are capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures". The latter is important enough to warrant thorough application to it, and success gained in this field is accounted something special. Anyone can acquire proficiency in the style and pronunciation of a foreign language. That is such a common possibility that it is scarcely considered worthy of much attention.

Josephus says this in order to explain why he never acquired a precise pronunciation of Greek, but at the same time he imparts an important piece of information about his people's knowledge of foreign languages, in this case Greek: if he had a mind to it, every freeman, even a slave, could achieve much as regards that knowledge, even as regards style and pronunciation. Evidently Josephus assumed that every inhabitant of his country could learn to speak quite good Greek if he were at all desirous to do so. This demonstrates that Greek was not only spoken in a few groups and classes, but that everyone in the Jewish country had the chance of speaking it. Greek could evidently be heard in all circles of Jewish society. And it was considered quite a common thing that all sorts of people from all sorts of classes became very proficient in speaking it.<sup>1</sup>

Although this passage at the end of the *Antiquities* thus incidentally gives important information about the knowledge of Greek among the Jews of Palestine in those days, it is of course primarily of importance for what it divulges about the great pains taken by Josephus to learn to read Greek and write it correctly. And in spite of his awareness of the faults in his pronunciation, he asserts with pride and satisfaction that he has achieved a very great deal regarding the writing of Greek. It is therefore only to be expected that in the further course of his life he made even greater headway in his knowledge of that language. It is not known how much Greek he acquired in Jerusalem in the first decades of his life, but a certain familiarity with Greek should probably be inferred from a statement about his visit to Rome at the age of 26, about 61 A.D. According to him, he there defended the cause of a number of priests whom he knew, admirable men who were sent as prisoners to Rome on an insignificant accusation. He meets Aliturus, an actor who was a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Arnold Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache*, 1896, pp. 61 et seq.; Zahn, *op. cit.*, I, p. 44; A. Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht des Josephus*, 1932, p. 238.

protégé of Nero and of Jewish blood, and through his mediation Poppea, whose assistance he calls on to obtain the liberation of the priests.<sup>1</sup> If he had never previously been abroad and had to consort with the highest circles of the imperial court, he must have become considerably well acquainted with Greek by the age of 26. And that in the Jewish country.

Nonetheless he leaves no doubt about Greek not being his native tongue. In his introduction to the 'Jewish War' he relates that originally he wrote this work τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ, in Aramaic or Hebrew, and thereafter translated it into Greek. The version in the first language was intended for the barbarians in the interior, τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις. A bit further on he explains to whom he refers: "Parthians and Babylonians and the most remote tribes of Arabia with our countrymen beyond the Euphrates and the inhabitants of Adiabene". But it would be too ridiculous if these people gained accurate information about the causes of the war by reading his description of the Jewish war, and "the Greeks and such Romans as were not engaged in the contest should remain in ignorance of these matters, with flattering or fictitious narratives as their only guide".<sup>2</sup>

In several places in this work the reason for writing it is stated clearly, and in certain passages in his other works Josephus leaves us in no doubt on this point. He had reasons for turning first of all to the barbarians in the interior. Writing as he did immediately after the Jewish war, he wanted to scare them off planning to continue the war elsewhere or taking violent revenge. The past had already sufficiently demonstrated that resistance to the Romans would lead irrevocably to defeat and so was fruitless. Probably it is not mere chance that the Parthians were the first of the 'barbarians' in the interior to be mentioned, for it was war with that people which formed a constant menace in the east of the Roman Empire. And if they attacked the Romans, the Jews on the other side of the Euphrates might once more hope for the defeat of the Romans. Josephus wishes to wipe away such illusions among the opponents of the Romans. After describing in detail the organisation of the Roman army, he concludes this section of his book with the remark: "If I have dwelt at length on this topic, my intention was not so

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<sup>1</sup> Vita 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. 1:3, 6.

much to extol the Romans as to console those whom they have vanquished and to deter others who might be tempted to revolt".<sup>1</sup> Perhaps these barbarians in the East would take such warnings to heart, for their own benefit. The Jewish people would have been spared much misery if it had heeded the plain indications Agrippa had given the Jews who urged a rebellion.<sup>2</sup> He too had reminded them with the aid of diverse examples of the invincibility of the Romans. Which people, for instance, could have better opposed the Romans than the Gauls, in a country that is surrounded on all sides by magnificent natural ramparts and whose soil is richly blessed with natural resources. And nevertheless the Gauls had to submit to being tributaries of the Romans and to having their own fortune being allotted to them by the latter. "And this they tolerate, not from any lack of spirit or because they are an ignoble race, they who for full eighty years fought for their independence, but because they are overawed at once by the power of Rome and by her fortune which brings her more triumphs than ever her arms".<sup>3</sup>

Such warnings coming from one who himself had originally participated in the Jewish war naturally accorded excellently with the line of imperial policy. Hence it is quite possible that this publication was strongly stimulated by the emperor and even owed its inception to him.<sup>4</sup> Evidently Titus found it very important to have it published and read everywhere: "indeed so anxious was the Emperor Titus that my volumes should be the sole authority from which the world should learn the facts, that he affixed his own signature to them and gave order for their publication".<sup>5</sup>

These being the background facts, it is perfectly understandable why Josephus also made a Greek version of this work. For it was of pre-eminent value that such an officially sanctioned version of the events should become known in as wide a circle as possible. By means of such a translation it would be possible to provide the sub-

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<sup>1</sup> B.J. III:108.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. II:345 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> B.J. II:371-373; cf. Ant. XX:71: there King Izates, a convert to Judaism, tries to dissuade the King of the Parthians from thinking a war against Rome could ever prove successful.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus*, 1920, pp. 126 et seq.; H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus* (The Loeb Classical Library), II, 1961, p. X.; R. O. P. Taylor, *Did Jesus Speak Aramaic?*, The Expository Times 1944/45, pp. 96 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Vita 363.

jects of the Roman Empire with a narrative of the facts,<sup>1</sup> and then it could not happen again that the Greeks and those Romans who were not involved in the conflict would remain ignorant of these matters "with flattering or fictitious narratives as their only guide".<sup>2</sup>

If in this way the work assumed an important place in the framework of an officially stimulated and sanctioned historiography and as such was ensured acceptance in the cultured world of that time, it need hardly be said that Josephus spared himself no trouble in making the language of the work as acceptable as possible to those circles and in doing his best to adapt himself to the literary taste of the readers he wanted to have in Rome.<sup>3</sup>

So Josephus devoted great trouble and care to the writing or translation of his works in Greek. He confesses that he dreaded the task of translating his 'Jewish War' in Greek: "...as time went on, as is wont to happen to those who design to attack large tasks, there was hesitation and delay on my part in rendering so vast a subject into a foreign and unfamiliar tongue (εἰς ἀλλοδαπὴν ἡμῶν καὶ ξένην διαλέκτου συνήθειαν)".<sup>4</sup> But regardless of how great this ὄκνος καὶ μέλλησις was, the work of translating was accomplished. And the result was that this labour did not turn out badly when judged by the standards which Josephus said he had set for himself: "charm of exposition, the choice of words and their proper arrangement, these contributions to the elegance of the narrative" can indeed

<sup>1</sup> B.J. I:3.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. I:6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. André Pelletier, s.j., *Flavius Josèphe adaptateur de la lettre d' Aristée, une réaction atticisme contre le koinè*, 1962., pp. 251-271; cf. also Ant. XIV:2 "...the relation and recording of events that are unknown to most people because of their antiquity require charm of exposition (τὸ τῆς ἀπαγγελίας κάλλος), such as is imparted by the choice of words and their proper arrangement and by whatever else contributes elegance to the narrative (ὅσα-συμβάλλεται κόσμον τῷ λόγῳ), in order that readers may receive such information with a certain degree of gratification and pleasure...".

<sup>4</sup> Ant I:7; Roberts moderates the expression 'a foreign and unfamiliar tongue' by comparing on this point Josephus with Scottish writers who endeavoured to write "correct and idiomatic English". "To them English was substantially 'a foreign tongue' as Josephus felt it to be with himself in regard to classical Greek", Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 444. Here 'foreign and unfamiliar' means that by nature Greek was a foreign language to Josephus, one he did not speak in daily life and hence one with which he simply was not familiar.

be discerned in this Greek version of the Jewish War.<sup>1</sup> This work has therefore merited the following commentary: "The style is an excellent specimen of the Atticistic Greek of the first century, modelled on, if not quite on level with, that of the great masters of the age of Pericles. A choice vocabulary, well knit sentences and paragraphs, niceties in the use of particles and the order of words, a uniformly classical style without slavish imitation of classical models—these and other excellencies combine to give the work high rank in Greek literature".<sup>2</sup>

This good Greek style of writing, the command of diverse figures of speech, the familiarity with the Greek world of thought which repeatedly are revealed in the other works of Josephus, could be highly significant indications to the answer to the question as to how much knowledge of Greek a Jew in the first century A.D. could acquire if he took serious pains about it, providing it were certain that the books which Josephus wrote were entirely his own work. But this is not completely certain. Josephus says himself that at least when writing his work on the Jewish war he used assistants. In his description of how his book on the Jewish war came into being he says: "Then, in the leisure which Rome afforded me, with all my material in readiness, and with the aid of some assistants for the sake of the Greek, at last I committed to writing my narrative of the events".<sup>3</sup> Of course one cannot say with absolute certainty what this *χρησάμενός τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς* meant in practice. The share of these assistants in formulating the Greek and in quoting and alluding to diverse works of Greek literature could possibly have been greater than this remark made *en passant* would suggest. Josephus made this remark with especial reference to the preliminary work on his book about the Jewish war. If the Greek of that book proves to be uniformly a remarkably good Greek, the natural assumption is that those assistants had a large share in it. And it is very possible that the Greek style becomes less perfect

<sup>1</sup> See Ant. XIV: 2, p. 73, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus, the Man and the Historian*, 1929, p. 104. In his introduction to this work in the Loeb Classical Library, this author elaborates further on this judgment (II, 1961, p. XIII et seq.) In *Contra Apionem*, Thackeray finds, *inter alia*, "a well-designed plan, great literary skill, and intimate acquaintance with Greek philosophy and poetry" (*ibid.* I, 1961, p. XVI). Pelletier likewise discerns in Josephus a repeated reversion to classical Greek, "*une réaction atticisante contre la koinè*", as the subtitle to his work runs, *op. cit.* pp. 259 et seq., 273 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Contra* Ap. I:50.

accordingly as Josephus made less use of his assistants. For example, from the fact that the Greek of his *Vita* is less well-rounded than that of his 'Jewish War' or 'Contra Apionem' Thackeray deduces that the usage of the Greek language in the first-mentioned work is closest to that of Josephus himself. He believes he can make a clear distinction in the *Antiquities* between the parts in which the assistants were responsible for a great deal of the work and in those where they were not. And he also believes that sometimes more or less distinctive personalities can be discerned among those assistants who were particularly familiar with the style and conceptions of certain Greek writers.<sup>1</sup>

Although opinions may differ as to the respective shares of the assistants and of Josephus himself in the compilation of one of his works, this use of assistants makes it difficult to deduce accurately from the Greek of those works how much knowledge a painstaking Jew of the first century could assimilate of the Greek language and literature.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, this incidental remark of Josephus can be of great importance to our subject for other reasons. Several other comments made by him prove that it apparently happened at times that an educated Jew who aspired to the dissemination of his writings in the Greek-speaking world therefore set about to acquire a thorough knowledge of Greek and a better command of the language than that of the compatriots in Palestine, who, according to the

<sup>1</sup> A. Thackeray, *Josephus the Man and the Historian*, 1929, in particular the Fifth Lecture: *Josephus and Hellenism: his Greek assistants*, pp. 100-124, and *id.*, *The Loeb Classical Library, Josephus*, II, 1961, pp. XV-XIX; IV, 1961, pp. XIV-XVII. A detailed argumentation against Thackeray on this point can be found in Shutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-75. The latter denies the existence of any clear indications that in part of the works of Josephus the hand of an assistant can be discerned who was acquainted with Sophocles or, in another work, signs of an assistant who tried to emulate the style of Thucydides, as is argued by Thackeray. I believe Shutt rightly emphasises that "the precise manner in which Josephus used these assistants is not stated", and that in the only place where these assistants are mentioned, Josephus merely states that he used them for his work on the Jewish War. According to Shutt it is quite possible that Josephus scarcely needed such help 20 years later when writing his *Antiquities*; pp. 66 et seq. Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. 260 et seq. evidently sides with Thackeray in his description of the work of Josephus' assistants. Cf. also V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 1961, pp. 318 et seq., 512<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Pelletier takes perhaps too little account of these συνεργοί, even though he does mention them, e.g. *op. cit.*, p. 257; Thackeray, on the other hand, overestimates the share of the assistants in my view, and perhaps this is why he underestimates Josephus' knowledge of Greek and his proficiency in writing that language.

testimony of Josephus, were certainly not ignorant of it. From this comment it appears that if a Jew in Palestine were aware of the limits of his own talent, he could make use of the assistance of others who were more proficient in speaking and writing Greek and who were better acquainted with the Greek literature and world of thought. Hence, for example, if in discussing the problems concerning the introduction to the Epistle of James, many New Testament scholars attribute the good Greek of this epistle to the assistance of a brother or brethren from the Jerusalem congregation who were better acquainted with that language, then although this explanation may give rise to exceptional difficulties particularly in the case of the Epistle of James,<sup>1</sup> Josephus' example demonstrates that such use of the assistance of others did indeed occur. And since the Jewish Christians of the first century A.D. were at least as eager as Josephus to have their particular message spread as clearly and widely as possible in the Greek-speaking world, one may safely assume that many of them employed the same means as Josephus, the assistance of others. Opportunity to do so certainly must have existed in the Jerusalem congregation for instance, and probably also in various others in the Jewish country. The information contained in the New Testament gives diverse, clear indications of such possibilities. And in Galilee, which bordered on intensely Hellenised areas and had a mixed population, those possibilities must have been at least as great, if not greater, than in Judea.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 10 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 93 et seq.



## CHAPTER TWO

### ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

#### A. THE DIASPORA

Although this study is concerned with the knowledge of Greek among the Jews in Palestine, it need hardly be said that an inquiry into the knowledge of that language among the Jews outside the Jewish country can throw significant light on the subject, particularly since there were close and frequent contacts between both groups.

A well-known fact is that Jews lived practically everywhere in the Roman empire at the beginning of the Christian era, and new archeological findings regularly supply additional proof of this. It appears that the written testimonials about their wide dissemination were not exaggerated. The brief comment of the author of the *Oracula Sibyllina*,<sup>1</sup> probably from the middle of the second century A.D., that the entire earth and the entire sea were full of this people, is confirmed by diverse concrete facts given by other authors. Strabo (1st century A.D.) is said by Josephus to write as follows about the Jews: "This people has already made its way into every city, and it is not easy to find any place in the habitable world which has not received this nation and in which it has not made its power felt (or: in which it has not become dominant, or: which has not been occupied by it)."<sup>2</sup>

Philo likewise describes various times how widely dispersed the Jews were in the world of that day and how closely bound they were to Jerusalem. Somewhere he writes: "...so populous are the Jews that no one country can hold them, and therefore they settle in very many of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Asia both in the islands and on the mainland, and while they hold the Holy City where stands the sacred Temple of the most high God to be their mother city, yet those which are theirs by inheritance from their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors even further back, are

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<sup>1</sup> Orac. Sibyll. III 271: *πᾶσα δὲ γαῖα σέθεν πλήρης καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα*; cf. P. Jean-Baptiste Frey C.S.SP., *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*, Vol. II, 1952, p. 5 (henceforth cited CIJ); W.C. van Unnik in "Het oudste Christendom en de antieke cultuur" I, 1951, pp. 557 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. XIV: 115.

in each case accounted by them to be their fatherland, in which they were born and reared, while to some of them they have come at the time of their foundation as immigrants to the satisfaction of the founders".<sup>1</sup>

In Philo, too, is to be found the letter which Agrippa I wrote to Caligula containing among other things a list of the lands and towns where the Jews resided: "...it (the Holy City) is the capital not of the single country of Judaea but of most other countries also, because of the colonies which it has sent out from time to time to the neighbouring lands of Egypt, Phoenicia and Syria (the so-called Coele Syria as well as Syria proper), to the distant countries of Pamphylia, Cilicia, most of Asia as far as Bithynia and the remote corners of Pontus, and in the same way to Europe, to Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, and most of the best parts of the Peloponnese. It is not only the continents that are full of Jewish colonies. So are the best known of the islands, Euboea, Cyprus and Crete. I say nothing about the regions beyond the Euphrates. With the exception of a small district, all of them, Babylon and those of the other satrapies which have fertile land around them, have Jewish settlers".<sup>2</sup>

Josephus also gives clear indications that the Jews were to be found everywhere in the world of that time. "There is not a people in the world which does not contain a portion of our race".<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere he testifies of the Jewish race that it is "densely interspersed among the native populations of the world".<sup>4</sup> And proudly he states: "The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed".<sup>5</sup> This information given by Josephus might appear to be greatly exaggerated did not another source, which can hardly be suspected of biassed exaggeration, contain a statement which accords in essence with that of Josephus. To be precise, Seneca mentions, though bitterly as is to be expected, that

<sup>1</sup> In Flaccum 45 et seq. (trans. Loeb Classical Library)

<sup>2</sup> Legatio ad Gajum 281-282 (trans. E. Mary Smallwood, Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gajum, 1961, p. 124)

<sup>3</sup> B.J. II:398.

<sup>4</sup> B.J. VII:43

<sup>5</sup> Contra Ap. II:282

"...the way of life (*consuetudo*) of the 'most criminal people' (*sceleratissimae gentis*) had so prevailed as to have come to be accepted through all lands; the vanquished had given laws to the victors".<sup>1</sup>

These literary data have long since been confirmed by archeological findings. Consequently both literary and archeological data have been cited by various authors to demonstrate the presence of Jews in the different parts of the Roman empire.<sup>2</sup> And whereas all the literary data have by now been scrutinised and hence form a constant body of proof, the archeological data continue to increase and at times testify to the residence of Jews in places unknown to us from literature.<sup>3</sup>

So there is absolutely no doubt that innumerable Jews lived in the diaspora, though it is difficult to estimate even approximately their numbers.<sup>4</sup> In any case these Jews remained in touch with Jerusalem through their payment of the 'double drachma' for the temple, and the transport of those temple taxes brought many of them to Jerusalem. Philo's comments on this are: "As the nation is very populous, the offerings of first-fruits are naturally exceedingly abundant. In fact, practically in every city there are banking places for the holy money where people regularly come and give their offerings. And at stated times there are appointed to carry the sacred tribute envoys selected on their merits, from every city those of the highest repute, under whose conduct the hopes of each and all will travel safely. For it is on these first-fruits, as prescribed by the Law, that the hopes of the pious rest".

And Josephus states that regarding the Jews in Babylonia, the money contributed by them was collected in a couple of towns, Nisibis and Nehardea, whence it was transported to Jerusalem by a

<sup>1</sup> According to a quotation in Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei*, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 40.1.298.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Schürer III, pp. 1—70; see further for a description of the diaspora J. Juster, *Les juifs dans l'empire romain*, 2 vol., 1914; H. Leclercq, *Judaïsme*, in: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 1927, tome VIII I, col. 1—254; R. H. Pfeiffer, *History of the New Testament Times*, 1949, pp. 166—230; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 1961, pp. 269—377. A detailed bibliography is also to be found in the last-mentioned work, pp. 541—549.

<sup>3</sup> Smallwood, *op. cit.*, 1961, p. 294, for example, mentions epigraphical data from CIJ which prove that Jews also lived in places not on the list of Juster I, 180—209.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. van Unnik, *op. cit.*, pp. 452 et seq.

guard of thousands of Jews, for fear that such a great treasure would be raided by the Parthians.<sup>1</sup>

Many more of these Jews of the diaspora came to Jerusalem as pilgrims to the holy city to celebrate certain festivals, particularly at Passover. Philo provides information on this aspect too: "Countless multitudes from countless cities come, some over land, others over sea, from east and west and north and south at every feast. They take the temple for their part as a general haven and safe refuge from the bustle and great turmoil of life and there they seek to find calm weather, and, released from the cares whose yoke has been heavy upon them from their earliest years, to enjoy a brief breathing-space in scenes of general cheerfulness".<sup>2</sup> From these statements of Philo it is not easy to deduce the exact numbers of pilgrims who went to Jerusalem to celebrate the festivals there. And *μυρίαι* probably only means that a great many were here, so that it makes little difference whether this word is translated as 'thousands' or 'tens of thousands'.<sup>3</sup> Josephus, however, gives the precise numbers of Jews who participated in the Passover festival in Jerusalem. Admittedly these include the inhabitants of that town, but his aim was to emphasise just how enormous were the numbers of Jews from the diaspora who went on the Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The total he gives is 2,700,000.<sup>4</sup> However this number appears to be a miscalculation, for Josephus says that 255,600 animals were sacrificed, one for every ten pilgrims. So one must conclude with Thackeray: "text or arithmetic is at fault",<sup>5</sup> otherwise both are somewhat surprising. Josephus' calculation is out by a good 150,000; elsewhere he again drastically rounds off this larger number and speaks of "not less than three millions", which Thackeray rightly proclaims "an impossible figure".<sup>6</sup> Using various data, Jeremias tried to establish precisely how many pilgrims really

<sup>1</sup> De spec.leg. I:78; Josephus, Ant. XVIII:312, 313; cf. Ant. XIV:112; Cicero, Pro Flacco 28; N.T.S. Oct. 1964, pp. 61 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> De spec.leg. I:69.

<sup>3</sup> For example Van Unnik, *op. cit.* p. 549, gives this translation. There is little justification for reading the precise specification of a number in this word as in the *πόσαι μυριάδες* of Acts 21:20. In my opinion Munck wrongly draws from it far-reaching conclusions, J. Munck, *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte*, 1954, pp. 235 et seq. No one would even dream of making such calculations with respect to Luke 12:1, where the same word occurs.

<sup>4</sup> B.J. VI:425.

<sup>5</sup> Loeb III, p. 499a.

<sup>6</sup> B.J. II:280; Thackeray in Loeb *loc. cit.*

did celebrate Passover at Jerusalem. At first he arrived at a total of about 180,000, including the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the last edition of his book he says this number is a little too high.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case may be, such endeavours to calculate the number of pilgrims show that a great many Jews from the diaspora visited Jerusalem and the Jewish country one or more times, though only very few will have been able to obey the prescription in Exodus 23:17 that three times in the year all males should appear before the Lord God.

What these literary and archeological data reveal about the Jews in the diaspora and their contacts with the Jewish land is repeatedly confirmed in the New Testament. Several times in Acts, Paul is said to have come across synagogues and to have spoken with Jews in the towns he visited. And proof of the presence in Jerusalem of Jews from the diaspora can be found in numerous passages in the New Testament. Sometimes the sojourn of diaspora Jews in the Jewish land is mentioned emphatically and at some length, sometimes only incidentally. It is not always clear whether the Jews were pilgrims who attended the festivals and hence paid only a short visit to Jerusalem, or whether they were Jews from the diaspora who had resided for a longer period, or even permanently, in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Does the list in Acts 2:9-11 refer to Jews who congregated in Jerusalem for the Pentecost celebrations or ones who resided in that town? Opinions differ. The εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι (verse 5) suggests the latter alternative, but it is understandable that some maintain that the context supports the former. Was Simon of Cyrene in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover or did he live there? Is it even certain that he was a Jew? <sup>3</sup> In any case Jews are known to have lived in Cyrenaica, and in Acts men from Cyrene are mentioned. That these included Jews is established by the mention, *inter alia*, of a synagogue of the Cyreneans. The existence of such a synagogue strongly suggests that a rather large number of Jews from Cyrenaica had come to live in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu* <sup>3</sup>, 1962, pp. 89-98.

<sup>2</sup> The view that the reference here is to Jews who had settled in Jerusalem can be found, for example, in E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 1959, p. 132; the other exegesis, for example, in Str. Bill. II., 1924, p. 604 and F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 1954, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 1951, pp. 341 et seq.; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, 1953, p. 588.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 6:9, cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 et seq.; further Acts 2:10; 11:20; 13:1; Josephus likewise speaks of Jews in the Cyrenaica, *Contra Ap.*

The Jews who paid a short visit to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost were certainly the ones of Asia who turned against Paul when they saw him in the temple and thought that the apostle had brought Trophimus an Ephesian into the temple (Acts 21:27, 29).

Hence there is abundant proof of manifold relations between the diaspora Jews and the Jewish land. That certainly also meant that Greek must have been spoken regularly in Jerusalem and its surroundings. For it is an established fact that, as a rule, the Jews outside Palestine spoke and wrote Greek and almost always thought in that language, particularly in the centuries around the beginning of the Christian era. Admittedly there was a time in Egypt, for example up to the middle of the second century B.C., when Greek had not yet replaced Aramaic as appears from some ostraca, and also a time later, about 400 A.D., when the leaders of two Jewish communities in a rural district of Egypt corresponded in Hebrew,<sup>1</sup> but the testimonials of the use of Greek among the Jews of the diaspora are so clear and so numerous that one can only assume that by far the majority of the diaspora Jews who went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem or settled in the Jewish land spoke Greek. Proof that many of them could read Greek is provided by the many Hellenistic-Jewish works which were written in Greek and certainly also read by the Jews in the diaspora.<sup>2</sup>

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II, 45; Ant. XIV:115; in this passage Josephus quotes Strabo; cf. Schürer III, pp. 52 et seq.; S. Applebaum, A Jewish Inscription from Berenike, Cyrenaica, in Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society 1960/61, pp. 167—174 (Hebr.): this inscription in Greek dating from the time of Nero mentions the rebuilding or reconstruction of the synagogue at Berenike (Benghasi).

<sup>1</sup> V. A. Tcherikover-A. Fuks, Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, Vol. I, 1957, pp. 30, 101 et seq. (henceforth referred to as CPJ; Vol. II is from 1960).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, E. Schürer, GJV III, 4 1909, pp. 420 et seq.; for the relations between the Hebrew and the Greek Sirach: C. C. Torrey, The Hebrew of the Geniza Sirach, in Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume, 1950, pp. 585—602. Torrey greatly prefers the Greek to the Hebrew Sirach and believes the former to be the original one. Concerning the Greek language: "We get inevitably from the Greek an impression of native force and originality of the writing of a master who knew what he wished to say, and who said it clearly and concisely" (p. 591). On the Hebrew: "The character of *Heb*, as the Greek version shows with certainty, is that of a text which has so deteriorated from its original form as to become incoherent, whereupon a multitude of gaps have been filled and improvements made by quotations of Scripture, these sometimes apposite, oftener inapposite" (p. 601). The chronological priority of the Greek Sirach is in my view very unlikely and no longer tenable since the discovery of a Hebrew Sirach scroll during the excavations at Masada, IEJ 1965, pp. 108 et seq.

It is also certain that the Septuaginta translation filled an urgent need felt in the diaspora and was welcomed by a great many Jews, because this was their only opportunity of really understanding the Law and the Prophets and of becoming familiar with them.<sup>1</sup> As a Greek, Philo draws a definitive distinction between Greeks and barbarians.<sup>2</sup> He considers it only natural that Moses also was instructed by teachers from Hellas: "Teachers at once arrived from different parts, some unbidden from the neighbouring countries and the provinces of Egypt, others summoned from Greece under promise of high reward".<sup>3</sup> Greek is so much his own language that, from the derivation of a certain proper name, he can formulate the contradistinction: ἔστι δὲ ὡς μὲν Ἑβραῖοι λέγουσι Φανουήλ, ὡς δὲ ἡμεῖς ἀποστροφὴ θεοῦ.<sup>4</sup> And in itself, it is very striking that the question whether Philo even knew Hebrew has long been and still is a moot point. Already in 1909 Cohn, in his introduction to the German translation of the works of Philo, formulated the problem thus: "The Bible text on which Philo bases his philosophical contemplations was the Septuagint. Perhaps he had no knowledge of Hebrew whatsoever. He has been credited with some knowledge of the Hebrew language, because in his writings etymological explanations of Biblical personal names often occur. However, it is quite possible that these etymologies are not of Philo himself, but have been taken over by him. The etymologies themselves bear witness to a very scant knowledge of Hebrew, for there occur very odd

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<sup>1</sup> B. H. Stricker has argued that this translation was imposed on the Jews by the edict of Ptolemaeus Philadelphos, that it was refused by them right from the beginning because it was written in the language of an alien people, in the language of the enemy, and hence not merely since the time that this translation became a Holy Scripture for the Christians, B. H. Stricker, *De brief van Aristaeas. De hellenistische codificaties der prae-helleense godsdiensten, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel LXII, No. 4, Amsterdam 1956.* Among those who contest his view is R. Hanhart, *Fragen um die Entstehung der LXX, Vetus Testamentum, 1962, pp. 139—163*; cf. W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation, 1967, pp. 193 et seq.*; Baruch Lifshitz, *R.B. 1965, p. 521*: „La traduction de la Bible est la meilleure preuve que l'hébreu était à cette époque une langue inconnue par une grande partie du peuple juif. Or on sait que la traduction des Septante était répandue non seulement dans la diaspora juive mais aussi en Palestine"; Goodenough, *op. cit.* XII, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Cher. 91.*

<sup>3</sup> *Vita Mos. I:21.*

<sup>4</sup> *Conf. Linguarum 129*: That name is in the Hebrew tongue 'Penue!l', but in our own 'turning from God'.

misunderstandings and confusions. Anyhow Philo bases his writing on the Greek translation only".<sup>1</sup> The problem posed here can hardly be solved with such hypothetical considerations as those of Delaunay: "It seems amazing to concede that the education of a young Jew, belonging to one of the best families of Alexandria, excluded the study and the knowledge of Hebrew: it seems to me utterly unlikely that this study, if neglected by the young man at the beginning, was not undertaken later by a mind so inquisitive, so eager to learn, so attached to the Law and national traditions".<sup>2</sup> It is very doubtful if such considerations must be accounted valid in a milieu in which the diaspora Jews regularly, and many probably exclusively, spoke Greek; where, too, with the possible exception of a few passages, the Septuagint was read aloud in the divine services in the synagogue, and where practically all were acquainted with the Scriptures in this language. In many lands of the diaspora there was no longer any point in writing or speaking about an interpretation of the Hebrew text for Jewish readers or listeners, because such was no longer known. Therefore there is every reason to say: "Modern scholars discuss at length the question whether Philo, the greatest thinker of the age, knew Hebrew. They are fully entitled to ask such a question, since in Philo's time Hebrew was almost unknown in Egypt. Thus Alexandrian Jewry discarded one of the most important cultural legacies of ancient Israel, its national language. The reason may be easily explained. Greek was spoken everywhere; it was the language of the greatest culture of the world and had an international value, whereas Hebrew, an ancient tongue of one people only, was increasingly becoming a foreign tongue, even to its own people. If the Alexandrian Jews were anxious to preserve the Torah, the only way to do so was to translate it into Greek, and so they abandoned the use of the Hebrew language in order to preserve the teachings of Moses".<sup>3</sup>

The Hellenisation of the Jews in the diaspora, sometimes even the quickening and slowing down of that process, can be more or less

<sup>1</sup> L. Cohn, *Die Werke Philos von Alexandria*, I, 1909, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> F. Delaunay, *Philon d'Alexandrie, Œcrits historiques*, 1867, pp. 15 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> CPJ I, p. 31, cf. pp. 101 et seq.; cf. further I. Heinemann, *Philons griechische und jüdische Bildung*, 1932, pp. 524—527; H. A. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 1948, pp. 88—90; S. Sandmel in *Hebrew College Annual*, 1954, pp. 219—221; Smallwood, *op. cit.*, p. 155; J. Klausner, *Philosophen und Denker (Hebr.)*, 1934, I., pp. 66—74; id., *Von Jesus zu Paulus*, 1950, pp. 181 et seq.; M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 1959, p. 35;



demonstrated on the grounds of diverse archeological data. Reference has long since been made in this connexion to the names given by parents to their children.<sup>1</sup> On the whole it is often possible to deduce from these names something about the degree of their mental adaptation to their surroundings. Obviously this is especially applicable to the Jews. Whenever they select non-Jewish names, ones borne by people of their immediate milieu, this is usually a more or less manifest indication of their desire to assimilate. And vice versa, the adherence to classical Jewish names points to a deep consciousness of what is peculiar to them, of what they wish to retain. Therefore it may nearly always be said: "The choice of personal names by Jews during their long history had always been influenced by two opposing tendencies: faithfulness to national traditions, and the wish to conform to the usages of their environment".<sup>2</sup> Abundant proof of the latter regarding the diaspora Jews of the centuries around the beginning of our calendar can be found in the archeological sources, and often those of a very early period. Mention is made in a papyrus from Egypt dating from 210 B.C. of three Jews, οἱ τρεῖς Ἰουδαῖοι τῆς ἐπιγονῆς, who stole grapes from a vineyard. All three have Greek names: Theophilos, Philistion, Timaios. The names of the fathers of two of them are decipherable, and these are similarly good Greek names: Dositheos and Telouphis.<sup>3</sup> In another papyrus from 201 B.C., Jews, οἱ ἐξ Ἰουδαῖοι, are called 'μάρτυρες'. Of these the following names are intelligible: Theodotos son of Jason, Diophantos son of Theodotos, Hieroous son of Timotheos, Milon son of Zosimos, Demokrates. . . , hence all Greek names. The name Sabbathaïos, which is perhaps the reading of the following

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J. G. Kahn, Did Philo know Hebrew?, *Tarbiz* 1964/65, pp. 337—345; A. T. Hanson, Philo's Etymologies, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 1967, p. 128-139; p. 138 et seq.: Philo thus emerges from our study as one who was rather more closely in touch with rabbinic learning than has generally been supposed. Not that he was anything like a rabbinic scholar himself. But he knew a little Hebrew, perhaps about as much as his great successor Origen acquired two hundred years later. He used his rabbinic sources when they supplied him with the information he required, but he did not hesitate to supplement them, when he chose, by means of his most faulty knowledge of Hebrew.

<sup>1</sup> One of the first to devote a great deal of attention to this was L. Zunz, *Namen der Juden*, 1837 which can also be found in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 1876, pp. 1-82.

<sup>2</sup> CPJ I, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> CPJ I, pp. 157 et seq.

one, would be the only exception.<sup>1</sup> And when a few years later in 182 B.C. a contract concerning a loan on mortgage is drawn up between two Ἰουδαῖοι τῆς ἐπιγονῆς, the one is called Apollonius, son of Protogenes, and the other Sostratos, son of Neoptolemos.<sup>2</sup> Of course many more examples of such data can be given. Moreover it should be borne in mind that on this point the only legitimate proofs which can be admitted are the archeological documents in which explicit indications are given that the persons concerned are Jews, but that it will naturally often happen that elsewhere, where Greek names are cited, these will refer to Jews, though there is no explicit statement to establish this fact. Nonetheless there are data in abundance to prove that in certain periods and certain parts of the Roman empire the diaspora Jews had adopted themselves completely to their surroundings with respect to personal names. From the aforesaid papyri this appears to have taken place at least a generation previously. Further back in time, however, there must have come a moment when the parents deliberately chose between loyalty to the Jewish tradition and a desire to adopt themselves to the usages of their milieu. If in a Jewish family the latter was chosen, this need not necessarily mean that the choice henceforth was continued involuntarily as tradition. There are some indications that an interruption came in the adaptation to surroundings with respect to the naming of offspring. It has been observed that a comparison between the names of the Jews in Egypt in the age of the Ptolemies with those of the Roman period reveals a manifest increase in the number of Hebrew and Aramaic forms. This could very probably be related to the growing consciousness among the Jews in Egypt of what was peculiar to them and attributable to the immigration of Palestine Jews in the troubled years between 60 and 70 A.D.<sup>3</sup> Even if this cannot be proved, these variations in the use of Greek names among the Jews of Egypt demonstrates that in certain periods the choice made in this matter was deliberate and hence is significant as gauge of the degree of Hellenisation.

Naturally it does not follow that Jews who gave their children Greek names could also speak Greek or were profoundly influenced by Hellenistic culture in all the aspects of their lives and thoughts.

<sup>1</sup> CPJ I, pp. 158 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> CPJ I, pp. 162 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> CPJ I, pp. 83 et seq.; cf. also V. Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, pp. 346 et seq., 523 et seq.

Probably the giving of such names sometimes signified nothing more than a superficial, outward adaptation to milieu. The names of the Jews in the catacombs of Rome include several connected with heathen gods, for example Aphrodisia, Asclepiodote, Dionysias, Hermogenes, Isidora.<sup>1</sup> From these it must not be concluded that Jewish parents who gave their children such names had become worshippers of these gods. They could simply have taken over such forms from their milieu without thinking much about their meanings.

A close scrutiny of the names in the Jewish catacombs of Rome has revealed something else which is of significance for determining the scope of the use of non-Jewish names. It appears, namely, that although in the use of various languages in those catacombs Greek prevails over Latin and Semitic, the purely Latin names on the inscriptions outnumber the Greek and Semitic taken together. This shows that the Jews in Rome had adopted the Latin names of the Romans among whom they lived to a much greater degree than the Latin language. Of the 551 names, the language of 254 is purely Latin, of 175 purely Greek, of 72 purely Semitic, of 35 Latin and Greek, of 12 Latin and Semitic and of 3 doubtful. That means there are 301 Latin names (54.6 %), 210 Greek ones (38.1 %) and 84 Semitic ones (15.2 %). Of the 534 inscriptions altogether, however, 405 are Greek (76 %), 123 Latin (23 %), 6 Semitic or bilingual (appr. 1 %).<sup>2</sup> Hence the preference for Latin names is much more marked than is suggested by the language of the inscriptions. All this goes to show that one cannot always infer from the use of names in a given language that the same language was also spoken by the givers or bearers of those names.

Obviously the language of the inscriptions outweighs the language of the names in determining the language spoken by the Jews in Rome. And then the above-mentioned statistics reveal that Greek

<sup>1</sup> See H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 101 et seq., 121; cf. CIJ I, 1936, pp. LXVII et seq.; here Frey remarks, *inter alia*,: "Il est même piquant d'observer que la Juive qui portait le nom d'Esidora (don d'Isis), était la fille d'un archonte de la communauté des Hébreux".

Of course the same holds good for the names mentioned in the funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim in Palestine. Rightly Lifshitz says of these: "Les Juifs, comme d'ailleurs les chrétiens à cette époque, portaient des noms formés sur les noms des divinités païennes. Il ne faut pas croire pour autant que les Juifs qui enterraient leurs morts à Besara pensaient à la signification des noms théophores païens qu'ils donnaient à leurs enfants. Ces noms avaient sans aucun doute perdu leur signification étymologique", R.B. 1965, p. 528.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 et seq., 76; cf. CIJ I, 1936, p. LXV et seq.

strongly prevailed. A comparison between the percentages of the various Jewish catacombs shows that there was a considerable difference in the way the languages were distributed. For example, of the 195 inscriptions in the Appia catacombs, 124 are in Greek and 71 in Latin; of the 68 in the Nomentana catacombs 63 are in Greek and 4 in Latin. The conclusion which is probably warranted is that the Jewish community around the Appia catacombs was the most Romanised and the one around the Nomentana catacombs the less Romanised. Hence if the use of Greek, also in the spoken language, was probably more common among the Jews in one quarter of the city than the other, an average of 76 % is still very striking. No less remarkable is the particularly slight use of Hebrew and Aramaic in the inscriptions. Admittedly some inscriptions in Greek or Latin contain the addition of a Hebrew word, such as שלום or ישראל or the expression שלום על ישראל, but even such additions do not comprise definite proof that a knowledge of Hebrew was not completely lacking.<sup>1</sup> My opinion is that such words and expressions, also in their Hebrew characters, quite possible had become sacred signs and sounds which were considered fitting in a funerary inscription, even though they were no longer used in everyday life. And it is questionable whether the same cannot be said of the inscriptions phrased solely in Hebrew, three in number, which are composed exclusively of such words and expressions, and of the bilingual inscriptions in which the name of a woman is reproduced in Aramaic and in Greek. Only one single inscription, in Aramaic, cannot perhaps be readily explained in this way, but its interpretation is uncertain and still a point of discussion. From the fact that the Semitic inscriptions, albeit few in number, and the inscriptions with an addition in Hebrew are all to be found in the Monteverde catacombs, Leon concludes that familiarity with Hebrew was kept alive among the group of Jews in the neighbourhood of those catacombs. This, I think, is going too far. If that really were so, it would be most amazing that that familiarity was witnessed in such a small number of inscriptions. Six out of 534, and 2 of them bilingual, is hardly significant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 76 does indeed see in this "an indication that the knowledge of Hebrew was not completely absent", cf. p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> See H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-78 and the numbers 290-293 on p. 307; cf. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. II, pp. 122 et seq., 124.

If the language of the inscriptions is rightly attributed more weight than that of the names they contain, it follows that Greek predominated to a large degree among the Jews in Rome. If, for example, it appears that 92.6 % of the funerary inscriptions are written in Greek, one may safely conclude that the Jews in that quarter spoke almost exclusively Greek. Account must of course be taken of the fact that most of the inscriptions were probably not made by a member of the family of the deceased but by professional stone-cutters. If one examines the reproductions in Frey's Corpus, one sees that several, especially those on marble, betray a craftsmanship which could only be expected of professionals, although it must be admitted at once that others have been executed in such a primitive and clumsy manner that they could have been made by just any member of the family. In any case it can safely be assumed that the language of the inscriptions was also that of the Jewish families to which the deceased belonged, the language which these Jews spoke and were familiar with.

If this is correct, something further can be inferred from differences in form and characteristics in the Greek of the inscriptions from the Jewish catacombs in Rome, namely that Greek did not prevail in one single group of the Jewish community, but in all living around the catacombs. Not much can be remarked on this point from the contents. Practically no information is imparted about the profession or social status. Only very occasionally is the profession mentioned: a painter (ζωγράφος), a teacher (διδάσκαλος), a lawyer (νομομαθής), a father of synagogues (πατήρ συναγωγίων), who was a pupil of the sages (μαθητής σοφῶν). In a Latin inscription mention is made of a market butcher (bubularus de macello), of whom is said in praise that he was a 'anima bona omniorum amicus'. This in itself is not faultless Latin, and even less so are the concluding words which follow immediately: 'dormitio tua inter dicaeis'. This mixture of Latin and Greek, meant to reproduce the Greek formula μετὰ τῶν δικαίων, clearly points to a certain knowledge of Greek. That is all that is said about professions in the funerary inscriptions, very little indeed, out of a total of 534. "Manifestly, no conclusions are justified on the basis of these scanty data".<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the contents of the inscriptions provide little on which to determine the social status of the Jews in Rome, something can

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<sup>1</sup> H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

definitely be inferred from their outward appearance and linguistic peculiarities. As for their outward appearance: certain of these inscriptions bear manifest testimony to the prosperity of those who commissioned them. Some are made on marble tablets, obviously by skilled craftsmen, in private tombs which are beautifully painted and contain expensive sarcophagi. But others—by far the majority—have been roughly scratched on the wall or on loose, shapeless slabs of marble in such clumsy characters that they are sometimes difficult to decipher. And the difference in language usually is in harmony with outward appearance. Whereas the former sometimes contain no errors in spelling or grammar, which indicates they were commissioned by people with a considerable knowledge of Greek, the latter teem with such errors, which in themselves often indicate the way the people in question pronounced Greek. All the above proves that prosperous individuals who were more or less acquainted with Greek culture were not lacking in the Jewish community in Rome, but that the great majority were simple, unlettered people whose colloquial language, however, was likewise Greek as a rule.

The conclusions about the relations in social status which can be drawn from the inscriptions are confirmed by literary data, in particular those pertaining to the great majority of Jews of a low social class. Hardly anything is revealed of standing and wealth among the Roman Jews. When Josephus journeyed to Rome to effectuate the liberation of a few Jewish priests, he managed to have himself introduced to Poppea by a *Ἰουδαῖος τὸ γένος*, Aliturus, but he is a Jew who was favoured by Nero only because he was an actor, a *μυμολόγος*.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing in the literary sources to show that the Jews in Rome exercised a powerful influence, or even a few of them because of their social position. On the contrary, they repeatedly testify to their poverty. Persius' description of a Jewish quarter in Rome does not give the impression it was well-to-do: sabbath lamps smoked behind greasy windows.<sup>2</sup> Martialis sneers at Menophilus, who was probably a Jewish actor, ridicules a Jewish poet and accuses him of immorality, and among all the noise that contaminates Rome, mentions that of a Jew who learned begging from his mother.<sup>3</sup> Juvenalis gives a bitter description of the desecra-

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<sup>1</sup> Vita 16.

<sup>2</sup> Sat. V:179 et seq.; cf. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols* I, 1935, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Epigr. VII:82; XI:94; XII:57.

tion of a former holy place, now the encampment of all sorts of poverty-stricken Jews:

“This is where Numa, by night, came to visit his goddess,  
That once holy grove, its sacred spring, and its temple,  
Now are let out to the Jews, if they have some straw and a basket,  
Every tree, these days, has to pay rent to the people.  
Kick the Muses out; the forest is swarming with beggars.  
So we go down to Egeria’s vale, with its modern improvements”<sup>1</sup>

According to him the synagogues are also places where diverse mendicant people congregate.<sup>2</sup> And in the passage in his caustic satire on Roman women in which he describes how the ladies have their fortune told by all sorts of characters, he mentions a Jewish woman who does this for a miserable fee:

“Well, this fellow has gone. The next to come is a Jewess  
Leaving her basket and hay, soliciting alms, all a-tremble,  
Claiming she knows the laws of Jerusalem. This High Priestess  
Has to live under a tree, but she knows all the secrets of Heaven.  
She, too, will fill her palm, but not too full; a few coppers  
Purchase, where Jews are concerned, fulfillment of dreams and fancies.”<sup>3</sup>

There is complete agreement about the Jews in Rome in these communications of three Roman writers which pertain to roughly the first century and a half A.D. And this agreement in the description of miserable poverty will certainly have been based in part on a contempt of this strange race. Therefore the image created is probably too unfavourable. The craftsmanship of Aquila the Jew from Rome who was a tentmaker, can be accounted an honourable profession, and there must have been many more Jews like him in Rome (Acts 18:3). Nevertheless it is perhaps typical that the latent anti-semitism of these Roman writers does not burst out in a violent criticism of the riches or financial, mercantile manipulations of Jews. Apparently there were no living examples of such in those days. If there had been, they would have been gratefully seized upon as subjects of satirical descriptions.

Elsewhere, too, it is primarily the archeological data which prove that in the diaspora the Jews belonged to widely diverging social groups, and that what Paul wrote about the composition of the community of Corinth certainly also can often be applied to

<sup>1</sup> Sat. III:12 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Sat. III:296.

<sup>3</sup> Sat. VI:542 et seq.

them: "not many of you were wise according to wordly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor. 1:26). The picture of the social status of the Jews in Egypt and especially in Alexandria, which is based exclusively on the literary sources is, in contrast to that of the Jews in Rome, involuntarily too favourable a representation. This is partly due to the fact that our informants on this point especially are Jewish writers, Josephus and Philo. Josephus' apologetic approach at times in this connection is demonstrated by the way he reacts to the abusive remark of Apion that the Jews of Alexandria had come from Syria and had gone to live near a hardbourless sea, γειτνιάσαντες ταῖς τῶν κυμάτων ἐκβολαῖς. These words probably mean more than "close beside the spot where the waves break on the beach" (Translation of Loeb I, p. 305). This could possibly also refer to all sorts of rubbish thrown overboard and washed up on to the beach. In any case Josephus feels called upon to counter the insinuation of these words of Apion by remarking that "the sea-board forms part of the city, and is, by universal consent, its finest residential quarter".<sup>1</sup> It is only to be expected that, when such a writer aims at demonstrating that the Jews are not always such socially-despicable creatures, he speaks with some pride of the prestige, power and wealth of certain Jews of Alexandria. He relates of Alexander the alabarch, brother of Philo, that he lent a large sum of money to the Jewish king Agrippa, when he wished to travel to Rome. Part of it was paid him in Alexandria and the rest was to be handed over when he arrived in Puteoli, which proved that Alexander engaged in business affairs in Italy too, and could draw on money deposited there.<sup>2</sup> Josephus also says that this same Alexander had the nine gates of the temple plated with gold and silver.<sup>3</sup> A testimonial not only of his great love for the sanctuary in Jerusalem, but also of his enormous wealth.

Among the very many Jews in Alexandria there were probably more who were wealthy, not to the same degree as this alabarch, but sufficiently wealthy to lend money for diverse purposes. In one of the aforesaid papyri, mention is made of a Jew who lent money on mortgage to another Jew, ἐπὶ ὑποθήκῃ τῇ ὑπαρχούσῃ αὐτῶι οἰκίαι, from which it therefore appears that the latter owned his own house.<sup>4</sup> Proof that the Jews engaged in money-lending can be found in the

<sup>1</sup> Contra Ap. II:33, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. XVIII:159, 160.

<sup>3</sup> B.J. V:205.

<sup>4</sup> CPJ I, p. 162.



letter from 41 A.D. in which the merchant Serapion writes to his friend Heracleides. The latter evidently became involved in financial difficulties and could find no way out of them. His friend advises him of a man who would perhaps be willing and able to help him, if he were approached with humble entreaties, if need be every day until he was filled with compassion. Ἐὰν μή, ὥς ἂν πάντες καὶ σὺ βλέπε σατὸν ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. If that does not succeed, beware, like everyone else, of the Jews.<sup>1</sup> This has been acclaimed by some as "the oldest testimonial of an economic antisemitism". But even if this letter from one business man to another is not such and is really only a warning not to enter the Jewish quarter of Alexandria in a period of great tension, the allusion to the possibility of seeking deliverance by turning to a Jewish moneylender does prove that the Jews sometimes operated in this capacity.<sup>2</sup>

From a remark made by Philo we can deduce that many Jews in Alexandria were engaged in business activities as well. He describes the socially ruinous results of the pogroms in the city in 38 A.D.: A still more grievous evil than the pillaging was the unemployment produced. The tradespeople had lost their stocks, and no one, husbandman, shipman, merchant, artisan was allowed to practise his usual business. Thus poverty was established in two ways: first, the pillaging, by which in the course of a single day they had become penniless, completely stripped of what they had, and secondly, their inability to make a living from their regular employments.<sup>3</sup> The mention of the first group reveals that many Jews of Alexandria had acquired the important social status of *ποριστής*, a man who risked losing stocks, investments, *ἐνθήκαι*. In this very important seaport there were also Jewish shipowners, *ναυκλήροι*, and many *ἐμπόροι*, merchants, wholesale traders who travelled widely and also imported their own stocks. And so this passage in Philo confirms that many of the Jews in Alexandria belonged to the well-to-do section of the population as a result of their business activities.

But Philo has more to impart. It appears there were many *γεωργοί* and *τεχνῖται* among the Jews who were prevented from continuing their work because of the pogroms. This is mentioned more or less

<sup>1</sup> BGU 1079.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten* 41923, p. 96; V. Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.* pp. 339 et seq.; this letter is also to be found in A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri*, I, 1952, pp. 296 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> In Flaccum 57.

incidentally. Needless to say, written sources, and certainly the ancient ones, generally make special mention of the eminent, notable members of society, the people who ostensibly exercised great influence over what happened in society and affairs of state. Consequently it is understandable that little is usually said about the ordinary, simple people who played much less important roles in society. In his description of the social consequences of the pogroms Philo devotes a few words to them. It is only to be expected that these ordinary people received relatively more attention in the papyri. And these reveal most clearly that certainly not all the Jews in Egypt were bankers, shipowners and wealthy merchants. On the contrary, despite the relatively few papyri which clearly mention Jews and therefore can serve as certain proof, this number is sufficient to demonstrate that the professions of the Jews were highly variegated and widely diverging as to degree of prosperity. The three Jews who were accused of stealing grapes from a vineyard could hardly have been rich men,<sup>1</sup> nor was Dorotheos, who ran off with a lady's cloak and sought refuge in a synagogue.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish woman who signed a contract to act as wet-nurse to a slave foundling for a period in return for 8 drachma and an amount of olive oil per month cannot be said to have done this out of luxury.<sup>3</sup>

Jews were to be found in the higher official posts in Egypt as well as lower ones, and the latter were probably more numerous than is revealed by our relatively scanty data in the papyri. In this field too, the former obviously attracted more public attention than the latter. The *Ιουδαῖος φυλακίτης*, mentioned as one of the witnesses at the end of a contract about a loan was probably an ordinary policeman.<sup>4</sup> Onias, whose name probably indicates that he was a Jew, was attached as *γραμματεὺς*, secretary, to a highly-placed official.<sup>5</sup> Josepos, the government official who was employed in a barn where chaff was stored, a *ἀχυροθήκη*, which was perhaps of a certain local importance in a rural area could hardly have been accounted an eminent civil servant, nor could the Jews who, in their capacity as *σιτόλογοι*, were concerned with the gathering of corn in the royal barns.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CPJ I, pp. 157 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> CPJ I, pp. 239 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> CPJ II, pp. 15 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> CPJ I, pp. 167 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> CPJ I, pp. 251 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> CPJ I, p. 220, nos. 100-103; CPJ II, pp. 215 et seq.

So it appears from the papyri excavated in Egypt that the Jews were to be found in all strata of the population; they provide good reason for agreeing with the conclusion of Tcherikover: "Generals, soldiers, policemen, officials, taxfarmers, estate-owners, agricultural laborers, slaves, craftsmen, merchants, moneylenders, and doubtless also members of the free professions such as physicians, scribes and the like—all these types of people were to be found in the Diaspora, and if we had more numerous sources at our disposal we should certainly discover a still greater variety".<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, does not automatically imply that all these Jews from differing social classes could speak Greek and equally well. This is certainly not always proved by the Greek of the papyri in which the Jews are mentioned. Just because a Jew is mentioned as witness to a contract drawn up in Greek does not imply that he could speak Greek. The Jewish wet-nurse could have been told about her duties and compensation in a different language from Greek. But we might reasonably assume that the numerous higher and lower bureaucratic officials had a fairly good command of the Greek language. Everyone who came into contact with government officials, administrative or legal bodies, knew from experience how important a knowledge of Greek could be, and in an environment where it was spoken by many, he will not have found it so difficult to learn. Undoubtedly the Greek spoken, especially in the rural areas, was not always perfect and interpreters were sometimes needed. But the percentage of Jews in Hellenistic Egypt who spoke that language must have been at least as high as that of the Jews in Rome. And as for the latter, the inscriptions in the Jewish catacombs speak a clear and unambiguous language.

Hence it is an established fact that very many Jews in the Diaspora spoke and understood Greek and, insofar as they were able, could also read it. For many of them it was the language with which they were most familiar in everyday life, and to such a degree that it was the only language in which they could express themselves properly. They could only speak other languages like Hebrew and Aramaic with difficulty—or not at all. If these Jews of the Diaspora annually, or at least a few times, flocked to Jerusalem, where they remained for a shorter or longer period, Greek must have been

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<sup>1</sup> V. Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, p. 343; cf. J. Klausner, *Von Jesus zu Paulus*, 1950, pp. 39 et seq.; H. I. Bell, *Juden und Griechen im römischen Alexandria*, 1927, p. 14.

spoken a great deal in the Jewish country. The percentage of diaspora Jews who spoke Greek was probably higher among those who travelled to Jerusalem than among the diaspora Jews in general, since a voyage to Jerusalem required a certain degree of prosperity and a lack of any knowledge of Greek might reasonably be expected to have been more common among the simple people who lived in more distant rural areas.

Once the early Christian communities in Palestine began to open up more relations with communities outside the Jewish land, the Greek language no doubt permeated from these countries beyond the frontiers of Palestine. In the communities in Palestine this must have been even more marked, since they maintained relations with heathens as well as with Jewish Christians of the diaspora. And practically all the heathens probably spoke Greek. In their language they, even more than the Jews of the diaspora, demonstrated that "the Greek language in the form of the Koine had become a truly universal language."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. PALESTINE

In the first century of the Christian era, the Jewish land was an island in a sea of Hellenistic powers. It is even questionable whether it had not at times been inundated by these powers. In any case it had long been surrounded by a ring of towns and regions in which the Hellenistic culture, which implied the use of Greek, dominated every aspect of life and society. In the course of times the influence of this Hellenistic civilisation had constantly expanded in the immediate surroundings of the Jewish land. New Hellenistic towns were added, the one after the other, under the successive rulers. Gaza was probably the first. When this town was devastated during the campaign of Alexander the Great, he ordered its reconstruction, and it was transformed from an oriental into a Hellenistic town. Pella and Dion in the country east of the Jordan are examples of towns which were probably hellenised in this same period. Their Macedonian names are definitely indicative of early origins. Thus Hellenism began to influence the regions surrounding the Jewish land even before the dominion of the Ptolemies. The memory of this period is clearly preserved in such names as Ptolemais (Acco), Philothesia, Philadelphia. This process of hellenisation continued

<sup>1</sup> A. Böhlig und P. Labib, *Die Koptisch-gnostische Schrift ohne Titel aus Codex II von Nag Hammadi*, 1962, p. 33.

under the Seleucids, who at times impressed the characteristic stamp of their government on certain towns by changing their old names into new ones commemorating an Antiochus or Seleucus. Consequently when the Romans occupied Palestine, it already contained a large number of Hellenistic towns, which were strung out in an almost continuous line near or along the coast of the Mediterranean and on the eastern side of Trans-Jordan. Here the towns of the Decapolis (Mk. 5:20; 7:31; Mt. 4:25), for instance Hippos, Pella, Gadara, Skythopolis, formed a centre of Hellenistic culture.<sup>1</sup> The last-mentioned town lay to the west of the Jordan. It was the ancient Beth Shean. An indication that Hellenism had penetrated a step further in the old country.

The number of Hellenistic towns further increased under the Herodians, for example when Herod the Great transformed the ancient Straton's Tower into a modernised, Hellenistic Caesarea and founded such new towns as Antipatris (Acts 23:31) and Phasaelis to the north of Jericho. Under his rule the process of hellenisation spread inland as far as Sebaste, the ancient Samaria. Macedonians had settled in this town as early as the time of Alexander the Great. Herod, who named the town in honour of emperor Augustus Sebaste, brought it new prosperity. It was he who had it peopled with veterans, and in the heart of Palestine there was created a town that was peopled mainly by non-Jews, where Greek undoubtedly was the colloquial language. Neapolis near Sichem, Tiberias, and Caesarea Philippi were also the foundations of rulers from the widely ramified family of Herod.

The process of hellenisation therefore had been going on for centuries in the regions immediately surrounding the Jewish country, and even deep within its frontiers, and in the first century A.D. it was still going strong. Naturally it is of some significance that for some time and almost continuously the country had been governed by rulers who themselves shared in this hellenistic civilisation, who often deliberately propagated it and consequently also the use of Greek as ordinary language. In that respect there was a degree of similarity between the Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans and Herodians. Even some of the Hasmoneans were not averse to Greek and indeed favoured it. And if certain members of the

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<sup>1</sup> A short description of about 30 hellenistic towns in Palestine, which came into being under the rule of the Macedonian kings, is given in Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, pp. 90-116, cf. Schürer II, pp. 27-56.

Herodian dynasty were more conservative in promoting Greek civilisation, they were so mainly in delicate points which could easily give rise to clashes with certain groups of the Jewish population.

What was the extent and depth of the influence of these Hellenistic towns? Some have cautioned that this influence must not be overestimated, certainly not its geographical aspect, since only part of Palestine was directly influenced by these towns. Nor should it be imagined that intellectuals, more highly civilised Greeks or Greek-speaking foreigners came to this outpost of the Roman empire—for example men who had read the works of leading Greek writers or had studied Greek philosophy. The majority of the Greek immigrants in this part of the empire were more likely Macedonian soldiers, ordinary farmers, mercenaries, traders and also adventurers. These need not always have been of the lowest intellectual order, but they did not come primarily as the bearers of Greek culture. Hence it cannot be said for sure that they exercised a strong intellectual influence on their environment; indeed it is quite possible that they were influenced by the oriental culture of their surroundings. Hence the process of hellenisation need not always have resulted in the suppression of the local languages by Greek. To a certain degree the immigrants must have adopted these local languages as their own.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to this point, it is difficult to determine the exact limits of a deeper permeation of the original population by the Hellenistic culture. Very complicated admixtures must have been formed which varied according to the different regions. Nevertheless this diversity must have applied least of all to the language. This does not mean that the local languages disappeared completely. On the contrary, there are plenty of indications that they continued to exist in spite of the increasing use of Greek owing to the gradually widening infiltration of Hellenism. One thing is certain however, these Hellenistic towns, which grew up around the Jewish country and also partially in the heart of Palestine and had already existed for centuries had been centres of the Greek language in all that time and still were in the first century. There the Greek language had the advantage over all others of being the official language, the one spoken throughout the entire state, the one which had to be spoken

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, pp. 33 et seq., 114-116.

by all who professionally had to communicate with fellow citizens of a different race.

Since Greek was spoken in these Palestinian towns, it inevitably permeated the Jewish country proper. All that has been said above about the contact between the diaspora in general and the religious centre of Jewry, naturally holds good to an even greater degree for those regions which on practically all sides encircled it so closely. Distances here rendered such contacts possible, regularly and even daily. From Jerusalem to Jaffa it was a good 70 kilometres, from Nazareth to Tiberias a good 30 kilometres, and by far the most of these Hellenistic towns lay within a radius of 200 km. from Jerusalem. There were many regions of the Jewish land which bordered directly on areas where mainly or almost exclusively Greek was spoken. The obvious assumption is that the inhabitants of such regions at least understood Greek, often spoke it and were thus bilingual. This can probably be said of people from all levels of society, not merely the top social or intellectual layer. In all layers of the population, then, the rule was probably a certain familiarity with Greek, certainly in Galilee, but also in other parts of the Jewish country directly adjoining the areas of the Hellenistic towns. To what extent the use of Greek penetrated the Jewish country in this way cannot readily be ascertained. However, it is probably incorrect to draw a clear distinction in this respect between the regions of the Hellenistic towns and the interior of Palestine and to say of the latter: "The major part of Judea, Samaria and Galilee was a country of villages and farmers (vernacular Aramaic) untouched by Hellenism, which fact should also be taken into consideration with respect to the places where Jesus worked in Galilee".<sup>2</sup> This may be true with respect to a deeper penetration of Hellenistic culture, but such a clear-cut distinction cannot be made with respect to the language, not even as far as the rural population is concerned. Considering the close proximity to Greek-speaking regions in which large sections of the population of Galilee lived, it is scarcely conceivable that they remained hermetically sealed off from the penetration of the Greek language throughout the centuries. And the same may be assumed of Judea, though for different reasons. Admittedly no part of it bordered on a Hellenistic region, but to counter this the festivals in Jerusalem were visited regularly by

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<sup>1</sup> R.G.G. <sup>3</sup>V, p. 24 (Art. Palestina).

many Jews from the Hellenistic towns. Because of the relatively short distance involved, this journey was easily made and hence was probably made more frequently than from the more distant diaspora.

So it is important to know whether Jews lived in these Hellenistic towns of Palestine and whether they were involved in the process of hellenisation to the extent that they spoke Greek in those regions. Various data about these towns strongly suggest the latter. A few illustrations are easily found and worth mentioning. One of the oldest Palestinian towns is Joppe, since time immemorial an important seaport that attained greatness and was also completely Graecized under the Ptolemies. It appears from the Zenon papyri, for example, that divers official bodies and Greek merchants had their seat in Joppe.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that it is with Joppe that the legend of Perseus and Andromeda is associated. It was on the rocks near this city that Andromeda was saved by Perseus from the attacks of the sea monster. This is related by many writers, and Hieronymus says that in his time he was shown the holes in which had lain the chains that bound Andromeda to the rocks.<sup>2</sup> Further proof of how quickly and thoroughly certain changes took place in the Hellenistic period is provided by a particularly significant find made in 1961 during the fifth excavation campaign on the site of ancient Joppe. A white marble tablet with a Greek inscription was found which runs as follows:<sup>3</sup>

βασιλέα μέγαν Πτολεμαῖον  
Θεον φιλοπάτορα τον (υῖον) βασιλέως  
Πτολεμαίου και βασιλίσσης  
Βερενίκης. Θ((ε))ῶν εὐεργετῶν  
Θεοῦ Πτο((λε))μα((ίω))υ βασιλέως  
((φιλ))αδ((έλ))φ((ου ἔκγο))νον Ἀναξικλῆς  
((ca. 101 i))ερευς τοῦ βασι-  
((λέως ἀνέθηκεν vac.)).

<sup>1</sup> Zenon Papyri (Catal. général des antiquités égypt. du Musée de Caire) 59011; 59093.

<sup>2</sup> Hieronymus, Comment. ad Jon. 1:3; Josephus already said the same, B.J. III:420; Schürer gives the passages in which Strabo, Mela, Pliny, Pausanias write on this subject, Schürer II, p. 33; cf. also Josephus, Ed. Loeb II, pp. 694 et seq., note a.

<sup>3</sup> As published by B. Lifshitz in ZDPV, 1962, p. 83; cf. id., R.B. 1965, pp. 520 et seq.; J. Kaplan, Jaffa's History Revealed by the Spade, Archaeology, December 1964, pp. 270-276. In that article this inscription is mentioned on p. 276; a reproduction of it is given on p. 274; a stamp for bread or cheese from the first century A.D. bears the name Ariston in Greek, p. 276.



This testifies that Ptolemy IV probably instituted this cult very shortly after his definitive victory over Antiochus III at Raphia in 217 B.C. This inscription mentions the name of Anaxicles, a priest of whom nothing further is known and of whom this dedication was undoubtedly one of the first acts pertaining to the new cult.

The number of Jews in this town must have increased greatly after its capture by the Hasmoneans, who probably attached great importance to it as a base from which they could control this part of the coast. Pompeius made Joppe an autonomous city once more, and even if the number of Jews did not increase greatly thereafter, they did stay on there after Pompeius' time.

Nor did the events of the first Jewish war in any way put an end to their residence in Joppe. This is made particularly manifest by the excavations. In the last century many Jewish funerary inscriptions have been excavated which date from the first centuries of the Christian era, presumably from the second and third centuries A.D. for the most part. Several names of rabbis mentioned in these inscriptions are also known from Jewish literature.

The number of these inscriptions, about 60, testifies that the number of Jews in Joppe at that time must have been rather large. Moreover, the additional mention of the land of origin in several funerary inscriptions shows that some of the Jews in Joppe came from the diaspora. Alexandria, Babylonia, Tarsus, Cappadocia, Cyrene and Chios are mentioned. Obviously this must have been the case in other towns as well. It is likely that the Jewish groups in the majority of the Hellenistic towns were more or less interspersed with Jews from the entire diaspora, especially in the towns located along important traffic and trade routes.

These funerary inscriptions also reveal that the professions of the Jews here were anything but limited to trade. The ones which state the deceased's profession are not numerous, though sufficiently so to illustrate the variety in the professions of the Jews. Twice mention is made of a baker, ἀρτοκόπος,<sup>1</sup> and twice of a φροντιστής.<sup>2</sup> What exactly the latter's work was is not quite certain. In non-Jewish sources this Greek word is sometimes used for the Latin procurator; hence his position in the Jewish community is often taken to be the warden of the property, of the synagogue building

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, nos. 902 and 940.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II, nos. 918 and 919; cf. CIJ I, p. XCI s; H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, pp. 191, 194.

and all connected with it. Furthermore mention is made of a *κεντηνάριος*, from which it appears that the Jews also served in the army,<sup>1</sup> of a *γρυτοπώλης*, a "marchand de chiffons" (Frey), a ragman, a "seller of small wares" (Liddell and Scott),<sup>2</sup> a *γναφεύς*, a fuller,<sup>3</sup> a *λινοπώλης*, a flax merchant,<sup>4</sup> one who belongs to a community of fishermen *τῆς ἐς τὸν βόλον συγγενικῆς*,<sup>5</sup> a *πρεσβευτής*, a messenger, servant of the community,<sup>6</sup> a *βηρεβι*, a renowned master.<sup>7</sup> This summary of the professions mentioned in the funerary inscriptions clearly demonstrates that the Jews in Joppe did include merchants, though certainly not exclusively, since they also included bakers, fishermen and fullers.

And the funerary inscriptions of these ordinary people are also composed in Greek. A long time ago it was noticed that a few of these inscriptions were written in Hebrew or Aramaic but the majority in Greek.<sup>8</sup> In several the Hebrew word *שָׁלוֹם* and sometimes too the Hebrew name of the deceased are added to the Greek inscription.<sup>9</sup> The incorrect spelling of the word *שָׁלוֹם*, written *שלוח* in one of the funerary inscriptions, shows just how little connexion there probably was between such words and the living, spoken language.<sup>10</sup> Of course this mistake could have been made by the man who engraved this inscription, but the person who commissioned the inscription would hardly have accepted it, especially since it concerned the consecrated word for peace. The impression one receives from these inscriptions is that Greek was the everyday language of the Jews in Joppe, which is only to be expected if they had flocked here from many countries of the

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, no. 920.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II, no. 928.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II, no. 929; mention is possibly made of another profession in this inscription, if for example *κυμινᾶς* is a hypocristic form of *κυμινοπώλης*, a vendor of caraway seed.

<sup>4</sup> CIJ II, no. 931; he is also the elder of the congregation of the Cappadocians, from Tarsus, *πρεσβύτερος τῆς Καππαδόκων Τάρσου*.

<sup>5</sup> CIJ II, no. 945. Frey's note to *συγγενική* is: Il ne signifie pas, sans doute, une corporation selon le type prévu par le droit romain, mais plutôt une association dans le genre qu'on constate dans l'Evangile de St. Luc. 5, 1-11 entre Simon et les fils de Zébédée.

<sup>6</sup> CIJ II, no. 949; here Frey has in mind someone who was called by the rabbis *שליח צבור*.

<sup>7</sup> CIJ II, no. 951. According to Frey, the *η* is written here instead of the *ι*.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Samuel Klein, *Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum*, 1920, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *שָׁלוֹם* for example in the nos. 908, 914, 920, 922, 933, 934, 937.

<sup>10</sup> CIJ II, no. 903.

diaspora. Perhaps only a few spoke Hebrew or Aramaic. In my opinion it is highly questionable whether these were scholars in particular.<sup>1</sup>

For that matter, the Greek of the funerary inscriptions is likewise not without its mistakes, and, just as in Beth Shearim, there occur numerous "phonetic and grammatical vulgarisms".<sup>2</sup> That phenomenon, too, indicates that the use of Greek was not limited to a few groups or classes among the Jews in the Palestinian towns, or to those circles among them which were concerned in trade and traffic, but that it occurred among the Jews of widely divergent professions. This was only to be expected in a town like Joppe, which had been subjected to Hellenistic influence for centuries. The funerary inscriptions demonstrate that, with respect to the use of Greek, that influence made itself felt until the second and third centuries A.D. In 1962 the fifth excavation campaign brought us close to the first century with its find of three Greek inscriptions, which were discovered in rectangular cavities made in a block of hard limestone. The three cavities of varying dimensions were used as moulds for casting lead weights. The inscription mentions a ἀγορανόμος called Juda, son of. . ., who held office in the ninth year of emperor Nerva-Trajan.<sup>3</sup> The obvious assumption is that in towns like Joppe Greek continued without interruption to be spoken by the Jews.

Caesarea owed its name to Herod the Great. Augustus had added the city, known then as Straton's Tower, and various other cities along the coast to his kingdom after the death of Anthony and Cleopatra. In honour of his benefactor Herod renamed the city Caesarea.<sup>4</sup> He ordered the construction of a harbour and magnificent buildings.<sup>5</sup> For ten or twelve years work was carried out on the dams, which made Caesarea an excellent harbour protected against the south-west wind, and on the complete renewal of the city. All these projects were finished in 12 or 10 B.C. Undoubtedly Herod's main aim was to make Caesarea a Hellenistic and not a Jewish city. According to Josephus he built there a temple dedicated

<sup>1</sup> According to Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> B. Lifshitz, ZDPV, 1962, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> R.B. 1963, p. 578; the ἀγορανόμος was the official who regulated the buying and selling in the market; cf. IEJ, 1962, pp. 149 et seq.; Archaeology, December 1964, p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Jos., B.J. I:396; Ant. XV:217.

<sup>5</sup> B.J. I:408-415, Ant. XV:331-341.

to Augustus, in which was placed a statue of the emperor larger than that of the Olympic Zeus, on which it was modelled, and one of Roma similar to that of Hera in Argos.<sup>1</sup> And "the rest of the buildings—amphitheatre, theatre, public places—were constructed in a style worthy of the name which the city bore." Moreover Herod introduced quinquennial games.<sup>2</sup> All this indicates that Herod wished primarily to make the city a typically Hellenistic one. It has always remained very closely associated with Judea. On the death of Herod, the city and Judea passed to Archelaus. When the latter was deposed, they came under Roman procurators, then for a while under Agrippa I, who was hated by the other inhabitants of Caesarea because of his benevolent attitude to the Jews,<sup>3</sup> and thereafter once more under Roman procurators.

This means that for a very long time and without interruption Judea was closely associated with a Hellenistic city in which Greek was the principal language.<sup>4</sup> The significance of this fact becomes even greater if we consider that Caesarea was the centre of Roman administration and the headquarters of the Roman army in the province, especially in the period when it was under Roman procurators. In many passages Josephus clearly hints at this, and it is confirmed in the New Testament.<sup>5</sup> Tacitus still calls Caesarea "caput Judaeae" and uses the present tense in this connexion. In his time, too, the city was evidently still the capital of Judea.<sup>6</sup> Eusebius relates that even under Decius Alexander, the bishop of the church of Jerusalem, was brought before the legal bench of the Roman governor in Caesarea because of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

All this indicates a lasting and multiple relationship between Judea and this Hellenistic town. And Jewish authorities and individual subjects who were in any way involved with this Roman administrative centre must have had to speak and write Greek.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Reifenberg, *Caesarea, A Study in the Decline of a Town*, IEJ 1950-51, pp. 20 et seq.; T. Corbishley, *The chronology of the reign of Herod the Great*, in *Journal of Theological Studies* 1935, pp. 22-32, in particular pp. 29-30; see also Schürer *op. cit.*, pp. 368 et seq.; R. Marcus, *Josephus*, Ed. Loeb VIII, p. 165<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. I:414, 415.

<sup>3</sup> Ant. XIX:356 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> B.J. II:236, 268, 288, 332; Ant. XVIII:55-59, XIX:365.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 10:1; 23:23-33; 25:1-13.

<sup>6</sup> Tac., *Hist.* II:78.

<sup>7</sup> Eus., *H.E.* VI:39:2.

For this was the language used by the Roman administration in its contacts with the subjects.

Many Jews lived in the city itself, and certainly in the middle of the first century A.D. From various statements of Josephus it can be inferred that no Jews lived in the former Straton's Tower, but that many, and later very many Jews settled there after Herod the Great built the new Caesarea. Josephus mentions disturbances between Jews and Syrians in Caesarea about 60 A.D. The Jews then claimed that the town belonged to them, since the founder Herod was a Jew. Their opponents conceded the Jewish descent of the founder, but insisted that the town belonged to the Greeks, since Herod would never have built statues and temples there if he had intended the town for the Jews.<sup>1</sup> And elsewhere Josephus states that these opponents of the Jews pointed out that before Herod's time there had not been a single Jewish inhabitant in the city.<sup>2</sup> In any case, these statements suggest that a considerable number of Jews lived in the town in the middle of the first century A.D., even though according to Josephus they remained in the minority and the Greek element strongly predominated. He says of Vespasian that he directed his troops to Ptolemaïs and from there εἰς τὴν παράλιον Καισάρειαν, μεγίστην τῆς τε Ἰουδαίας πόλιν καὶ το πλεόν (variant πλεῖστον) ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων οἰκουμένην.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the number of Jews must have been large, as appears from the number of victims of the massacre carried out among the Jews on a sabbath in the year 66 A.D. Josephus states that more than 20,000 were killed in the space of an hour, and those who managed to escape were captured and carried off in chains at the order of Florus.<sup>4</sup>

Hence there lived in the capital of Judea many Jews, who had the same civic rights as all the other inhabitants and who therefore could likewise participate in the municipal administration. They undoubtedly spoke Greek in their frequent intercourse with each other.

In some respects the archaeological data confirm the literary data, though naturally it is difficult to deduce from them the number of Jews in Caesarea, and the material can seldom be dated precisely. In certain excavations various layers have been laid

<sup>1</sup> B.J. II:266.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. XX:173.

<sup>3</sup> B.J. III:409.

<sup>4</sup> B.J. II:456, 457; cf. B.J. VII:361 et seq.

bare, right down to the remains of the buildings of Herod. The fourth campaign of an Italian archeological expedition laid bare the theatre on the southern side of Caesarea and, on the northern, part of the encircling wall which dates from the time of Herod. On the former was discovered a painted pavement with multi-coloured geometrical motifs, which clearly resemble the fresco decoration at Masada and in the palace of Herod at Jericho.<sup>1</sup>

That many, principally Greek seals were found on urns was only to be expected in a place like Caesarea and signifies nothing about the language spoken in the city itself, since these urns often came from elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Of greater significance are the funerary inscriptions, some of which can readily be identified as belonging to Jewish graves. Jewish names often testify clearly to this. It has also been said that it is possible to distinguish between Jewish and Christian funerary inscriptions on the grounds of the Greek words used to indicate the funerary monument: *μημόριον* or *μεμόριον* in the former and *θήκη* in the latter.<sup>3</sup> It is questionable whether a definite distinction can always be made on the grounds of these names, though it is a fact that this distinction can often be made on the grounds of the inscriptions known to us.

Here, as in Rome, it does happen that the inscription is composed in Greek but ends with the Hebrew word *שלוה*.<sup>4</sup> This could imply also in this case that the normal language of the Jews residing in Caesarea was Greek, but that certain traditional formulas were phrased in Hebrew.

Some of the Jews in Caesarea undoubtedly came from elsewhere. Of one it is stated emphatically that he came from Babylonia: *Μημόριον Μεγάλου Βαβυλωναρίου υἱοῦ Ζερέκα*, monument of Megalos

<sup>1</sup> R.B. 1963, p. 579. This discovery is of enormous significance: Maintenant la découverte du pavement peint dans le théâtre hérodien de Césarée vient fournir un anneau qui manquait dans la chaîne de ce genre insolite de peinture à l'époque hellénistique.

<sup>2</sup> R.B., 1963, pp. 556-558: B. Lifshitz, Timbres amphoriques trouvés à Césarée de Palestine.

<sup>3</sup> M. Schwabe, Two jewish-greek inscriptions recently discovered at Caesarea, in IEJ 1953, pp. 127 et seq.; R.B. 1961, pp. 115, 119; cf. also M. Schwabe, A Jewish Sepulchral Inscription from Caesarea Palestinae, IEJ 1950-51, pp. 49-53; B. Lifshitz, La nécropole juive de Césarée, R.B. 1964, pp. 384-387; there an undoubtedly Jewish grave is mentioned with the inscription *θήκη* to indicate the grave; B. Lifshitz, Inscriptions de Césarée en Palestine R.B. 1965, pp. 98-107.

<sup>4</sup> CIJ II, no. 887.

the Babylonian, son of Zereka.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand it appears for example from the funerary inscriptions in Rome that the Jews of Caesarea did not always remain there. A Jewish woman who was buried in Rome was the wife of Γελασίου τοῦ κεσαρέως, of Gelasius of Caesarea. Whereas it is not stated expressly that here the reference is to the Palestinian Caesarea on sea, it is in another inscription in Rome: Μακεδόνις ὁ Αἰβρῆος κεσαρεὺς τῆς παλεστίνης, Macedonius, the Hebrew, a Caesarean of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> This testifies to the mobility of many Jews within the Roman empire. It was all the easier for the Jews to seize the opportunity of settling in diverse parts of the empire, since they did not have to overcome linguistic difficulties before they could feel at home among other Jews and non-Jews in their completely new surroundings.

Another member of the Herod dynasty honoured the emperor of his day by giving his name to a city which he built: Herod Antipas founded Tiberias on the western bank of the lake of Galilee. It is known that he built this town on the site of an ancient burialground and therefore made it impossible at first for faithful Jews to settle there, since according to their law contact with graves rendered them unclean.<sup>3</sup> This is why Herod Antipas had to compel diverse people to go and live there. Consequently the population can be assumed to have been composed of various elements. Later the city certainly numbered Jews among its inhabitants. Josephus mentions a προσευχή, a μέγιστον οἶκημα.<sup>4</sup> But the Greeks, too, were very numerous. Jewish leaders massacred all of them, πάντας τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας Ἑλλήνας ὅσοι τε πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου γεγόνησαν αὐτῶν ἐχθροί.<sup>5</sup>

Herod Antipas also saw to it that there was no lack of magnificent buildings in this town, which for a long time was destined to be the capital of Galilee.<sup>6</sup> He built a stadium and a royal palace. Apparently the latter was always a thorn in the eyes of the Jews, and during the Jewish war some of them set fire to it.<sup>7</sup> It is one of the proofs that in many respects this town, too, had a Hellenistic character. Another was the form of administration. The town had

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, no. 889.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Leon, *op. cit.*, no. 25 (p. 268) and no. 370 (p. 319).

<sup>3</sup> Num. 19:16; Ant. XVIII:36-38.

<sup>4</sup> Vita 277.

<sup>5</sup> Vita 67.

<sup>6</sup> Vita 37.

<sup>7</sup> Vita 66.

a βουλή consisting of 600 members, among whom the δέκαπρωτοι formed a special group.<sup>1</sup> Possibly it is to a member of such a council that reference is made in the inscription which can be partially read on a sarcophagus ornamented with Jewish symbols: τοῦ Ἰσιδῶρου βουλευτοῦ ζήσαντος. Since this sarcophagus, which was found at El Hammām near Tiberias, probably dates from the third or fourth century A.D., there is no question here of a man who belonged to the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, but perhaps of a local sanhedrin, who was also a member of the βουλή, which governed the city as a whole. Two other inscriptions on a Jewish sarcophagus found on the same site are likewise written in Greek, as is also a Jewish funerary inscription from Tiberias itself.<sup>2</sup>

About twenty miles south of Tiberias lay Scythopolis, the only town of the Decapolis, the Hellenistic group of towns which lay to the west of the Jordan, half way between this river and the Gilboa mountains. It was a very ancient city often still called by its former name Beth-Shean. Josephus calls Scythopolis "the largest city of Dekapolis and in the neighbourhood of Tiberias".<sup>3</sup> From this remark it appears to have been a very important town, and from "in the neighbourhood of Tiberias" it can probably be inferred that it was a town that controlled a large surrounding rural area. This is also known from other sources. Elsewhere Josephus states that the region of Scythopolis bordered on that of Gadara, which lay to the north-east on the other side of the Jordan.<sup>4</sup> According to Josephus the name Scythopolis was used by the Greeks.<sup>5</sup> The fact that he mentions this emphatically in two places could indicate that certain groups in the town and its surroundings still used the old name Beth-Shean. Quite possibly these included the Jews, who had lived there for a long time, at least since the end of the Seleucid period. Antiochus III was favourably inclined towards the Jews, and hence it is possible that the Jews came to live in the city and the surrounding area after this region was captured by the Seleucids.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B.J. II:641, 639; Vita 69.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II, nos. 985, 986, 984; cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.*, I, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> B.J. III:446.

<sup>4</sup> Vita 42; cf. Polybius V:70.

<sup>5</sup> Ant. XII:348; XIII:188.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. II Macc. 12:30, where there is some questions of Jews ἐκεῖ καθεστῶτων, i.e. sojourning in the town Scythopolis itself.



It goes without saying that, in that period and region, a knowledge of Greek was always presumed and that in diverse ways the Jews there came into contact with Greek-speaking and -writing authorities and private persons. That persons in authority at that time took it for granted that all the inhabitants of the region knew Greek has been further established by recent excavations. In 1960 a limestone stele was found during the levelling works between Hefzibah and Bet ha Shiṭṭah, about 7 Km. northwest of Beth-Shean. True, it is damaged, but in several places the Greek inscription is clearly legible, and with the insertion of plausible passages a coherent entity can be reconstructed. The inscription mentions the orders issued by king Antiochus III and his eldest son Antiochus for the benefit of Ptolemaios, military governor and chief priest of Koile Syria and Phoinike. The latter apparently was experiencing difficulties with property he owned or controlled in villages in that region. Because of them he addressed himself to the king. The outcome was a number of pronouncements by Antiochus III. Official records dating from 202-195 B.C. are mentioned on this stele. Several words are missing at the beginning of the inscription, but the following is a very plausible reconstruction of the first three lines: "King Antiochos to Ptolemaios greetings. . . . do order that having inscribed on stelae of stone or white tablets the letters, one shall set them up in the pertaining villages". This means that, in numerous villages where Ptolemaios seems to have encountered difficulties, the official records mentioned in Greek in this inscription were also made known to all the inhabitants in the same language. Apparently it was taken for granted that all who lived there, including the Jews, could read them.<sup>1</sup>

If indeed only the Greeks called the town Scythopolis, this could mean that the Jews who lived there used the old name and that they belonged to those inhabitants of the town and surrounding area who spoke a Semitic language. Possibly an indirect confirmation of this is to be found in a few bilingual funerary inscriptions which were found in Jerusalem. One states in Hebrew **אמיה הבשנית** and in Greek *Ἀμμία Σκυθοπολιτίσσα*. Another **חנן הבשני** and *Ἄντν Σκυθοπολείτης*, a third **פפיס הבשני** and also *Παπίας καὶ Σαλώμη Σκυθοπολεῖται*. These funerary inscriptions could indicate that the Jews from the region of Scythopolis were bilingual. In any event,

<sup>1</sup> Y. H. Landau, A Greek Inscription Found Near Hefzibah, IEJ 1966, pp. 54-70.

they are an indication that, there too, the Jews spoke Greek. That is not remarkable if large groups of Jews and non-Jews lived and worked alongside each other in this town. And if Josephus may be accounted reliable, except perhaps regarding the number of Jews, in his description of the dramatic events in 66 A.D. during the Jewish war, then the Jews there must have been greatly impressed by the power of this city.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Josephus says that the Jews in Scythopolis, "regarding their own security as more important than the ties of blood", at first sided with their non-Jewish fellow-citizens against the Jews who invaded the region of Scythopolis. Their choice proved to be of no avail, however, for nonetheless more than 13,000 of them were massacred and their possessions were plundered, according to Josephus.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly it appears from the Mishnah that the Jews encountered their own peculiar difficulties in living alongside their fellow-citizens in towns like this one. This town is mentioned specifically in a few places, though as Beth-Shean and not Scythopolis. On the days of the heathen festivals, the shops of the heathens were decorated, but not those of the Jews.<sup>3</sup> In another passage a Jew is said to have bought wine from a heathen in Beth-Shean. This probably means that Jews living in the city often bought their wine from heathen wine-growers from the surrounding rural area.<sup>4</sup> These instances illustrate how close the contact between Jews and Greeks in such Hellenistic towns must have been in ordinary, every-day life, in good and bad times in a town west of the Jordan and not far from the borders of Judea. And the aforesaid funerary inscriptions prove that these borders were often enough crossed by Jews who must have been fully acquainted with Greek owing to their manifold contacts with Hellenistic fellow-citizens. Even though these funerary inscriptions cannot be dated precisely, they are repeatedly placed chronologically in a period that differs little from the one in which the New Testament came into existence.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, nos. 1372-1374; cf. Samuel Klein, *Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum*, 1920, pp. 20 et seq., nos. 11-13; M. Avi-Yonah in an article on Scythopolis, *IEJ* 1962, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. II:466-468, cf. VII:364 et seq.; Vita 26.

<sup>3</sup> Abodah Zarah I:4.

<sup>4</sup> Ib. IV:12.

<sup>5</sup> M. Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, II, 2, 1906; pp. 191-197: last century before the devastation of Jerusalem; P. Thomsen, *Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem*, ZDPV,

The fact that Scythopolis was a Hellenistic town has been established further by the excavations carried out since 1962. Parts of the Roman theatre have been uncovered. Diverse ornaments have been found, including sections of a frieze depicting a mythological animal with the body and head of a hippopotamus and the long horns of a he-goat. In the vault under the proscenium there stood a marble altar bearing a Greek inscription containing the name of the builder: Absalom, son of Zenodorus. A natural assumption is that the man who thus mentions his building achievement in Greek was a hellenised Jew. In 1964 parts of a mosaic floor were found in Beth-Shean which probably date from the fifth or sixth century A.D. On them are, *inter alia*, two Greek inscriptions, one of two and the other of eight lines. Also a Nilometer is delineated above the God of the Nile, and on it the level of this river is indicated from 10 to 16 in successive Greek figures. The mosaic floor, which also depicts Odysseus and the Sirens, once formed part of a large house built by Leontis and his brother Jonathan, who are mentioned in the inscriptions. Furthermore an ancient synagogue has been brought to light which had the form of a basilica; Greek and Samaritan inscriptions have been found on the floors of adjacent rooms.<sup>1</sup>

As final example of a town that for long was strongly influenced by Hellenism, I should like to mention Marisa. In this instance the reason is not that so much is known about its inhabitants in the first century A.D., but that it was situated in Idumea to the south-west of Jerusalem, and hence much closer to the heart of the Jewish land than such towns as Caesarea and Scythopolis. Besides, it is known that from early times this town maintained important relations with other countries and that these were reflected in the composition of the town's population.

Archeological finds have provided details concerning a period about which literary sources have particularly little to say regarding Palestine. They pertain to the third and second centuries B.C. Much has been learnt about the former from the Zenon papyri.

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1921, pp. 120 et seq., no. 204, p. 159: 100 B.C.-150 A.D.; cf. Schürer, II, p. 171<sup>316</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 151; R.B. 1963, p. 585; IEJ 1963, pp. 148 et seq.; ZDPV 1964, p. 156; IEJ 1965, pp. 262, 267.

A detailed description of the house of Leontis and reproductions of the mosaic are to be found in the article by N. Zori, *The House of Kyrios Leontis at Beth Shean*, IEJ 1966, pp. 123-134, Plates 9-13.

In 1915 the very extensive archives of Zenon were discovered in the region of the former village of Philadelphia in the Fayûm. Zenon's superior was Apollonius, minister of finances, διοικητής, under Ptolemy II Philadelphos. He received many commissions from his master, and one of these was a journey to Palestine in 259 B.C., where he remained for a year. He brought home a variety of documents and letters from this journey and thereafter maintained his contacts in Palestine. The documents pertaining to Palestine comprise only a small section of the entire, extremely large archives, scarcely 1/30, but these papyri written in Greek give us rather precise information about Zenon's visit to Marisa. There he had purchased some young slaves, who had run away from him and had returned to their former masters. These masters demanded a compensation of 500 drachmas for the return of the slaves to Zenon. In five letters addressed by Zenon to official bodies in Marisa, i.e. the municipal administration and the head of the local police force, he expressly pleads for the special treatment of his deputy, appointed to deal with this affair in Marisa. It appears that Zaidelos and Colochoutos, two brothers who already had received their full payment for the slaves sold to Zenon, demanded an additional, large sum of money, now that they were able to exploit their good fortune that the slaves they once sold had returned to them. It would not have been at all surprising if Zenon had reacted to this treatment by writing a very indignant letter, but actually he restrained himself. He even wrote five letters to secure the return of these slaves, and the compensation demanded was high, 500 drachmas. It appears that Zeno appreciated that these gentlemen of Marisa were powerful and independent.<sup>1</sup>

The impression one receives from such correspondence is that under the Ptolemies in the third century B.C. many contacts existed between such a town as Marisa and Egypt and that many administrative and commercial affairs were transacted in Greek.

Another archeological find reveals that, in a period somewhat later, many citizens of Marisa were well acquainted with Greek. Graves have been found there which date from the third and second

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<sup>1</sup> Zenon Papyri (Musée de Caire) 59015; Zenon Papyri which pertain to Jews in Palestine are discussed in CPJ I, pp. 115 et seq.; literature on these papyri CPJ I, pp. 115, 118 et seq.; Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, pp. 60-73, bibliography: p. 427<sup>53</sup>; F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Tome I, 1952, pp. 65-71.

century B.C. Some of the murals depict subjects from Greek mythology, and the inscriptions are written in Greek. One of the most important of these funerary inscriptions mentions a certain Apolophanes, son of Sesmaios, who was head of the Sidonians in Marisa for 33 years. The inference is that there was a sort of colony of Sidonians in Marisa which, in certain respects, formed a close community, just like the Jews in Alexandria. It is not quite certain, however, whether ἀρχας means "to be head of". It could also mean that this Apolophanes was a member of a council of archons. Moreover it is questionable whether reference is made here to original inhabitants of Sidon who had settled in Marisa or to Canaanites in the broader meaning of the word. The same problem arises in connection with οἱ ἐν Συκίμοις Σιδώνιοι, the Sidonians of Shechem, mentioned by Josephus.<sup>1</sup> In any case it concerns a group of the population which was of foreign origin and evidently highly hellenised. Since the funerary inscriptions also mention in Greek the names of Idumeans and Jews, it is therefore evident that the population of Marisa was very heterogeneous at that time, but that all groups had in common a certain degree of Hellenistic civilisation. The Graecized names of all three groups, Sidonians, Idumeans and Jews, are written in Greek, proof that the process of hellenisation had been going on for several generations.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally and rightly it can be said that these archeological finds testify to the situation in Marisa in the third and second centuries B.C. It undoubtedly changed later. One can even agree with Goodenough, who says: "It seems reasonable to suppose that we have here a picture of the sort of syncretizing hellenization against which, as it affected Jews, the Maccabees revolted".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ant. XI:344; XII:257 et seq.; cf. the annotation to XI:344 in Ed. Loeb VI, pp. 480 et seq., and Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, p. 453, note 128; about the graves in Marisa: J.P. Peters and H. Thiersch, *The Painted Tombs of the Necropolis of Marisa*, 1905; Schürer II, pp. 4 et seq.; F.M. Abel, *Tombeaux récemment découverts à Marisa*, R.B. 1925, pp. 267-275; C. Watzinger, *Denkmäler Palästinas*, II, 1935, pp. 17 et seq.; M. Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture*, 1959, pp. 227-229; Goodenough, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 65 et seq.; W. F. Albright, *Archäologie in Palästina*, 1962, pp. 146 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Tome I, 1952, p. 55 et seq. Remarkable, too, is the love letter in Greek scratched on the wall of one of the mortuary tombs, cf. Peters and Thiersch, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 et seq., Zev Vilnay, *Israel*, Amsterdam 1963, pp. 240 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 74.

Josephus informs us explicitly that John Hyrcanus compelled the population of the Idumean towns Adora and Marisa to accept Jewry. He permitted the Idumeans "to remain in their country so long as they had themselves circumcised and were willing to observe the laws of the Jews".<sup>1</sup> It is very doubtful whether Jewry imposed in this way permeated very far and whether the process of hellenisation was interrupted in such towns. If so, it must have been only temporarily. Josephus mentions Marisa as one of the towns which Pompeius removed from Jewish dominion and returned to the province of Syria. Obviously Pompeius restored to the legitimate inhabitants precisely those towns which were influenced by Hellenism before the rule of the Maccabees (τοῖς γνησίοις ἀποδοῦς πολίταις B.J. I: 157; τοῖς οἰκήτορσιν ἀπέδωκεν Ant. XIV: 75). And if Marisa was one of them, this proves that this town was also accounted one of the typically Greek towns.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is likely that the process of hellenisation continued after being interrupted for only a relatively short period. And since it is not feasible that the imposition of Jewish laws on the inhabitants put an end to speaking the Greek language, for centuries in Marisa Greek must have been the language of intercourse between the various groups of the population, one of which was that of the Jews.

This brief summary of certain literary and archeological data concerning the towns of Joppe, Caesarea, Tiberias, Scythopolis and Marisa adequately demonstrates how, for a long time and at close quarters, the centre of the Jewish country was surrounded by regions that were strongly influenced by Hellenism, and this is manifested by the wide use of the Greek language. And the inhabitants of the Jewish country cannot but have come into regular contact with regions only a short distance away. This must have greatly stimulated the use of Greek as common language.

Hence much Greek was spoken in the immediate vicinity of the heart of the Jewish land, also by the Jews who lived there. This must also have influenced the use of that language in the land itself. Naturally it must also be established whether there are any concrete indications that the Jews in the centre of the Jewish land encountered the use of Greek and that they had a command of that language. In the first place, they daily and in various ways came across the Greek language. This does not necessarily warrant the

<sup>1</sup> Ant. XIII:257.

<sup>2</sup> B.J. I:156; 157; Ant. XIV:75.

assumption that they could speak that language or even read it, but they were constantly reminded that they lived in a world in which Greek was taken to be the common language. For example, when the government wished to announce something that applied to all subjects, it did so in Greek. If it issued an official decree, a Latin version was appended, but this was primarily the language used between the higher Roman authorities in administration and army. The Greek version was intended for everyone else, and it was assumed that in this way official resolutions could be made known to all subjects. On this point the archeological data confirm the literary and sometimes provide information hitherto unknown from the latter. In the final chapter of his description of the life of Augustus, Suetonius mentions that a year and four months before he died, Augustus deposited four documents with the Vestal virgins. One of them contained a summary of the things he had done (*index rerum a se gestarum*).<sup>1</sup> None of these documents has been found in the form laid down by Augustus shortly before his death (*in aeneis tabulis, quae ante mausoleum statuuntur*). But the major part of the description of the *res gestae* has been found as a bilingual inscription—Greek and Latin—in the temple of Roma and Augustus at Ancyra. This *monumentum Ancyranum* can now be supplemented with a Greek text found at Apollonia in Pisidia and a Latin one found at Antioch in Pisidia.

According to Josephus already Caesar had issued decrees in Greek and Latin. The resolution to appoint the Jewish high priest Hyrcanus II had to be engraved on a bronze tablet *ἐλληνιστὶ καὶ ῥωμαϊστὶ* and deposited with the official records of the town Sidon.<sup>2</sup> Also at Caesar's orders certain decrees similarly engraved *γράμμασιν Ῥωμαικοῖς καὶ Ἑλληνικοῖς* had to be erected in the temples of Sidon, Tyre and Askalon.<sup>3</sup> And Mark Antony wrote to the people of Tyre that he wanted one of his decrees included in the official public proclamations, in Latin and Greek, in a place where the tablet was as visible as possible (*ἐν τῷ ἐπιφανεστάτῳ*) so that all could read it.<sup>4</sup>

Hence we may conclude that, in countries outside Palestine, official documents were often issued in two languages. In Palestine, too, they were not unknown. The best known are probably the

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, Augustus 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ant. XIV:191.

<sup>3</sup> Ant. XIV:197.

<sup>4</sup> Ant. XIV:319.

plaques (στῆλαι) affixed at regular intervals to the stone fencing (δρύφακτος) in the temple, on which heathens were informed that they were forbidden to go any further into the sanctuary. Josephus states that this prohibition was written in Greek and in Latin and that the Romans had given the Jews permission to put all trespassers to death, even Romans.<sup>1</sup> This information given by Josephus was partially confirmed by the discovery of an intact specimen of such an inscription as early as 1871 and later of a damaged specimen of which the extant text shows only one insignificant deviation from the complete text that was found.<sup>2</sup> This runs: Μηδένα ἀλλογενῆ εἰσπορεύεσθαι ἐντὸς τοῦ περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τρυφάκτου και περιβόλου. Ὅς δ' ἂν ληφθῇ ἑαυτῷ αἵτιος ἔσται διὰ το ἑξακολουθεῖν θάνατον. No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows.<sup>3</sup>

This inscription, found in an intact and in a damaged specimen is of such significance for the present subject because it probably must be dated in the first half of the first century of the christian era.<sup>4</sup> Strangely enough it has not yet been found in a Latin version.

<sup>1</sup> B.J. V:193 et seq., VI:124-126; Ant. XV:417; cf. Philo, Leg. ad Gaium 212; Middoth II:3; Kelim I:8; Acts 21:26 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II, no. 1400.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek text can be found, inter alia, in CIJ II, no. 1400 (with a reproduction of the stone and the text in capitals and verses). A. Deissmann, Licht vom Osten <sup>4</sup>1923, p. 63 (with a reproduction of the stone); Schürer II, p. 329 (in capitals and verses); German translations in Str.B. II, 1924, pp. 761 et seq.; S. Klein, Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum 1920, pp. 85 et seq.; and Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 63; a French translation CIJ II, p. 330; the above mentioned English one in Josephus, ed. Loeb VIII, p. 203; earlier literature on this text in the article by Peter Thomsen, Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem und ihrer nächsten Umgebung, ZDPV 1921, pp. 7 et seq. and in Schürer II, p. 329; for the problems concerning these inscriptions cf. inter alia Elias J. Bickermann, The Warning Inscription of Herod's Temple, J.Q.R., New Series 1946-'47, pp. 387-405 and S. Zeitlin, The Warning Inscription of the Temple, J.Q.R., New Series 1947-'48, pp. 111-116. The problem of the competency of the Jewish authorities regarding the pronouncement and execution of the death penalty in connexion with this inscription among other things is dealt with by A.N. Sherwin-White, Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament, 1963, p. 38, 43<sup>1</sup>; cf. C. H. Dodd, Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel, 1963, pp. 105 et seq. For a treatment of the damaged specimen found in 1935, cf. J. H. Iliff, The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine, 6(1936), pp. 1-3, and the above-mentioned articles of Bickermann and Zeitlin.

<sup>4</sup> For example P. Thomsen, ZDPV, 1921, p. 159; Albright believes: ... diese (the two stones) gehören vermutlich den letzten Jahrzehnten des



To that extent, therefore, what Josephus informs us is not confirmed. However, the Greek text is now known of the prohibition for non-Jews to enter certain parts of the temple, contained in an inscription which every Jew could see when he passed this enclosure on his way further into the temple. The prohibition did not apply to him, but to the ἀλλογενής, as the inscription says, the ἀλλόφυλος or ἀλλοεθνής, according to Josephus. Probably he paid little attention to it when he passed it regularly, but all Jews, no matter where they came from, and most frequently those who lived in Jerusalem were reminded by such a plaque that Greek was the language which all were supposed to know.

Whereas it could be argued that this inscription was not intended for the Jews and hence did not have to be read by them, there was another one written in Greek which definitely did apply to them, at least if it really did stand in Galilee. This is probable, though many uncertainties still surround this archeological discovery. The inscription is on a marble plaque which has been in the Froehner collection in Paris since 1878, but it was only published by Cumont half a century later. His version of the text runs as follows:

Διάταγμα καίσαρος  
 Ἄρεσκει μοι τάφους τύνβους  
 τε, οἵτινες εἰς θρεσκειᾶν προγόνων  
 ἐποίησαν ἢ τέκνων ἢ οἰκείων,  
 τούτους μένειν ἀμετακινήτους  
 τον αἰῶνα· ἐάν δέ τις ἐπιδ(ε)ῖξῃ τι-  
 να ἢ καταλελυκότα ἢ ἄλλω τινὶ  
 τρόπῳ τοὺς κεκηδευμένους  
 ἐξερριφρότα ἢ εἰς ἑτέρους  
 τόπους δώλῳ πονηρῶ με-  
 τατεθεικότα ἐπ' ἀδικίᾳ τῇ τῶν  
 κεκηδευμένων ἢ κατόχους ἢ λί-  
 θους μετατεθεικότα κατα τοῦ  
 τοιούτου κριτήριον ἐγὼ κελεύω  
 γενέσθαι καθάπερ περὶ θεῶν  
 ε(ἰ)ς τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων θρησκ-  
 κ(ε)ῖας. Πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον δεήσει  
 τοὺς κεκηδευμένους τειμαῖν

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zweiten Tempels und nicht dem Beginn unserer Zeitrechnung an", W. F. Albright, Archäologie in Palästina, 1962, p. 154.

καθόλου μηδενὶ ἐξέστω μετα-  
 κεινῆσαι· εἰ δὲ μή, τοῦτον ἐγὼ κε-  
 φαλῆς κατάκριτον ὀνόματι  
 τυμβωρυχίας θέλω γενέσθαι.<sup>1</sup>

Bruce's translation of the text is: "It is my pleasure that sepulchres and tombs, which have been erected as solemn memorials of ancestors or children or relatives, shall remain undisturbed in perpetuity. If it be shown that anyone has either destroyed them or otherwise thrown out the bodies which have been buried there or removed them with malicious intent to another place, thus committing a crime against those buried there, or removed the headstones or other stones, I command that against such person the same sentence be passed in respect of solemn memorials of men as is laid down in respect of the gods. Much rather must one pay respect to those who are buried. Let no one disturb them on my account. Otherwise it is my will that capital sentence be passed upon such persons for the crime of tombspoliation".<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say many questions have arisen concerning this inscription, and of these only the ones relevant to the present subject will be dealt with. Firstly the provenance of this tablet. The only original indication is the annotation made by the collector Froehner, to whose collection the tablet originally belonged: "Dalle de marbre envoyée de Nazareth en 1878." Since he was a man of great precision, this annotation is undoubtedly correct. Of course this does not mean that the marble tablet definitely was found in Nazareth or that it originally stood there. Nevertheless this is a plausible assumption.

The second question is, what was the character of this inscription. It was probably not an imperial edict in origin, but the emperor's answer to a question put to him by the governor of Syria or by the prefect of Judea, perhaps in connexion with an actual case of tomb spoliation. In that case Cumont would rightly refer to the correspondence between Trajan and Pliny. One of the questions put by the stadtholder of Bithynia to his emperor concerned the

<sup>1</sup> F. Cumont, *Un rescrit impérial sur la violation de sépulture*, *Revue historique* 1930, pp. 241 et seq.; the Greek text is also reproduced in S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, 1957, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Christianity under Claudius*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Sept. 1961, pp. 309 et seq., for this inscription see pp. 318 et seq.; this translation p. 319.

transfer of the remains of a deceased to another grave. The governor of Syria or the prefect of Judea could then have asked the emperor what punishment should be imposed for tomb spoliation. That correspondence would naturally be in Latin, like that between Pliny and Trajan.<sup>1</sup> This original Latin rescriptum of the emperor would then have been translated into Greek and erected in various public places, also in Nazareth, as a precautionary threat to tomb spoliators. Cumont has pointed out that here and there the original Latin can be clearly discerned in the Latinized Greek of the inscription.

Thirdly the question of date is of great import. The general opinion is that the form of the characters indicates the first half of the first century A.D. or even a little earlier as the period of origin. This in no way establishes which emperor issued it. Cumont believes that Augustus probably did so, though he also thinks it possible that Tiberius wrote this in answer to a question put by Pilate about the Jews' accusation of tomb spoliation by the disciples of Jesus. The assumption is that Pilate told this to Tiberius and asked advice about what he should do about such an accusation. This διὰ τὰ γμα Καίσαρος could then have been an extract from the emperor's reply, engraved as inscription on a marble tablet and posted in several places, including Nazareth. Needless to say this is only a hypothesis. Cumont is fully aware of this: "The desire to attach exceptional significance to our Palestinian document must not induce us to ignore the fragility of such a supposition". In the Christian tradition can be found no trace of the disciples having been prosecuted by Pilate because of τυμβωρυχία. Although Cumont does not preclude this interpretation, he prefers the hypothesis that the text pertains to a religious restoration under Augustus.<sup>2</sup>

Bruce likewise believes that the form of the characters on the inscription indicates that it dates from the first half of the first century A.D. He considers it unlikely that such an inscription, deriving directly or indirectly from the emperor, would have been posted in Galilee before this region was incorporated in the province of Judea and hence was placed directly under Roman rule. In this case, 44 A.D., the year in which Herod Agrippa who was tetrarch of Galilee from 39-44 A.D. died, would be the terminus a quo for the erection of this inscription, and it would therefore

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

derive from Claudius. Bruce considers it possible that Claudius had remarked the ever-increasing number of Christians and had enquired about the rise of this movement—"antiquarian as he was"—and in the process had received information from his close friend Herod Agrippa. In this way he discovered that this baneful movement began with an act of tomb spoliation. He therefore resolved to impose a particularly heavy punishment for repetition of such an act, in any case in Palestine. To this end copies of such a rescriptum, sent to the procurator of Judea or the governor of Syria, had to be erected in those places specially connected with the stories of the Gospels, hence Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth.<sup>1</sup>

This reconstruction of the circumstances which gave rise to the inscription is likewise an hypothesis, and not a particularly plausible one in my opinion. This line of reasoning makes a dating after 44 hardly acceptable. There are no grounds for excluding absolutely the possibility that such a warning against tomb spoliation, whether or not issued directly or indirectly by the emperor, was posted before 44, for all to see, in a region which had been ruled by a succession of members of the Herod family. Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), Herod Antipas (4 B.C.-39 A.D.) and Herod Agrippa (39-44 A.D.) will not have objected to having an imperial rescriptum made known to the inhabitants of Galilee in this way.

Hence any association of this inscription with a given emperor continues to remain an hypothesis. But even if its dating on the ground of the form of the letters admits of a wide margin, and the period must be taken as the first half of the first century A.D., the erection in Galilee of such a marble tablet with a Greek inscription would demonstrate that the inhabitants of that region at that time were assumed to know Greek. If a copy of this imperial rescriptum were also made known in this way to the people elsewhere in the Jewish land, this would mean that they, like the Jews of Galilee, were expected to be able to read and understand such proclamations. There would hardly have been any sense in posting such a warning in Galilee if the Jewish inhabitants could not read it. This would be of even greater significance if this inscription formed part of a correspondence between the emperor and the governor or procurator which was originally carried out

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 320; cf. T. Momigliano, *L'Opera dell'Imperatore Claudio*, 1932, pp. 73-76; Brandon *op. cit.*, pp. 119 et seq.; E. Dinkler, *Signum Crucis*, 1967, p. 157.

in Latin. The inference would then be that a Latin text was not considered intelligible to the inhabitants of Galilee, but that a Greek translation was, and that an Aramaic or Hebrew version was not considered necessary for this purpose.

There are two other inscriptions from Galilee which could be of great significance if a certain interpretation of them could be established definitely and if it were known exactly when they were made. These are the two inscriptions in Greek characters which were found engraved in the rocks between Uscha and Schefaram in Galilee. The texts are almost identical. The first, now disappeared but recorded while still legible, runs as follows:

CA -B  
ΓΟΥΛΛΑC BA

The second is slightly different, but its contents are considered to be essentially identical with the first. It runs as follows:

CA / B  
ΓΟΥΛΛΑ CBAI <sup>1</sup>

We can no longer check whether indeed there is a Y in the first where there is a Ψ in the second. Moreover there is an I at the end of the second line of the second inscription which is not present in the first one. The meaning of these Greek characters is not quite clear. However, the first line is almost always linked up with the last letters of the second. They thus form the word CABBA(T)I or CABBA(T). This inscription is therefore often interpreted in connexion with the name which the fellahin gave to the rocks on which they are engraved, namely "the rocks of the sabbath". This could mean that these texts were intended as a demarcation of how far one could go on the sabbath, hence the *σαββάτου ὁδός*.<sup>2</sup> Probably the distance of 2000 cubits which the Jews were allowed to travel on that day was calculated precisely for every settlement and recorded in various places. And it is to this that the inscription in question could refer. The trouble is that no one has ever succeeded in giving a satisfactory interpretation of the remaining letters of these inscriptions. If, however, these inscriptions were placed to mark the distance from a given place which the Jews were permitted to travel on the sabbath, then it is highly remarkable that they are

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, no. 992.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 1:12; cf. Str. Bill. II, pp. 590-594.

written in Greek characters. A text that applied exclusively to Jews, in the neighbourhood of a place in Galilee and legible in Greek only: this could only mean that the Jews of that region were expected to know sufficient Greek to read and understand a demarcation of where the sabbath journey had to end.

There is absolutely no certainty as to the dating of these inscriptions. Frey reminds us that, about the year 136, the Beit-din was removed from Jamnia to Uscha and that consequently an important Jewish centre developed there after that year.<sup>1</sup> But this does not necessarily imply that this date would have to be the terminus a quo for the creation of these rock inscriptions. They were placed about 120 paces apart. The distance between Uscha and Schefaram was about 2 km., and so the one inscription could therefore indicate the limit of the sabbath journey from Uscha, and the other from Schefaram. In that case the first one need not necessarily be connected with an exceptional expansion of Uscha after 136. However soever this may be, it remains strange that a road sign connected with a legal proscription for the Jews in Galilee was engraved in Greek.

In the first century A.D. and for a long time before then, there were Greek legends on coins. If, however, reference is made to a coin without any further specification, there can be no certainty as to the language of the legend. This obtains, for example, for the coin which Jesus had fetched when he was artfully asked whether it was permissible to pay taxes to the emperor. (Mk. 12:13-17). If it were known for certain that the *ἐπιγραφή* on this coin was written in Greek, then perhaps a justifiable assumption would be that the Jews of that time could read this text. Of course it is also possible that the Jews knew what was written on it without having any knowledge of the language and that Jesus asked the question even if it were so "that he himself could hardly read Latin or Greek letters".<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is likely that the *ἐπιγραφή* was written in Latin, not Greek. For example, a Roman denarius with the head of Tiberius and the Latin legend Ti(berius) Caesar Divi Aug(usti) F(ilius) Augustus has long been known.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 1951, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Mudden, *History of Jewish Coinage*, 1864, p. 247 shows a reproduction of it; cf. also V. Taylor, *the Gospel according to St. Mark*, 1953, p. 479. A list of works about the coins is given in Goodenough, *op. cit* I, p. 268, at the beginning of the chapter on Jewish coins of Palestine.

Nevertheless the inhabitants of the Jewish land must long have been accustomed to seeing coins bearing Greek legends. Even the Jewish rulers over the various parts of Palestine made increasingly more use of Greek on their coins. The Maccabees John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.) and Judas Aristobulus (104-103 B.C.) still used Hebrew characters only. But Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.) had his name and titles engraved in Greek as well on his coins. He was also the first to designate himself king on his coins.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Hyrcanus II (63-40 B.C.) again used Hebrew only. His successor Antigonus Mattathias (40-37 B.C.) gives his high priestly title in Hebrew on one side of his coin and on the other his royal title in Greek. Herod I the Great (37-4 B.C.) was the first ruler of the Jewish land to use Greek characters only on his coins, and, after him, the same obtains for Herod Archelaus (4 B.C.-6 A.D.), Herod Antipas (4 B.C.-39 A.D.), Herod Philip II (4 B.C.-34 A.D.), Herod Agrippa I (37, 40, 41-44 A.D.) and Herod Agrippa II (50-100 A.D.). Whereas all these rulers of the house of Herod agree in their use of the Greek language on their coins, they differ in their use of representations. Herod the Great still anxiously avoids the portrayal of heathen emblems. And the Roman authorities also took care on the whole not to violate the prescription of the Jewish law and consequently only allowed neutral representations on the coins, such as an ear of corn, a palm tree, an olive branch, three lilies, a vine leaf. But Herod Philip II (4 B.C.-34 A.D.) did not hesitate to run counter to the Jewish law in this respect. He was the first Jewish ruler to have a Roman emperor portrayed on his coins. On the reverse side he had a temple depicted.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, in doing so he must have greatly provoked his Jewish subjects. In his territory, which encompassed Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, Gaulanitis and Paneas, the Jews were in a minority, however. Non-Jews greatly predominated in numbers.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, 1947, p. 14; Tcherikover, *Hell. Civ.*, p. 252; Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 272; cf. also G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine (Galilee, Samaria, and Judaea)*, 1914, pp. CIX-CXI; L. A. Mayer, *A. Bibliography of Jewish Numismatics*, 1966; IEJ 1967, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> A like coin is reproduced in *Antiquity and Survival*, Vol. II, Nos 2-3, 1957, p. 228, no. 16, in an article by A. Kindler, *Coins as Documents for Israel's Ancient History*, pp. 225-236; for Herod Philip II see also A. Reifenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Goodenough, *op. cit.*, I, p. 274.

The application of heathen emblems to coins went even further under Herod Agrippa II (50-100 A.D.). Little wonder. He always sided with the Romans and even fought with his army under Roman command against the Jews. Hence the strange phenomenon that a representation of the goddess of victory repeatedly appears on his coins in the years of his reign following the Jewish War. In that period, which ended with the fall of Masada in 73 A.D., the Romans apparently did not allow the Jewish monarch to mint his own coins. But the first ones minted in 74 A.D. by Agrippa after the Jewish revolt bore a portrait of Titus on one side and on the other a representation of Nike with a wreath in her right hand and a palm branch in her left hand that reaches over her shoulder.<sup>1</sup> Later, when his coins bore the head of Domitian, there was also a representation of Nike with the same attributes or with her foot on a helm and writing on a shield resting on her knees. Specimens of these have been found in recent years, also with a Greek text, for example a coin dating from 78 A.D. with the head of Domitian and the inscription ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟC on the one side and a portrait of Nike with shield and the inscription ΕΤΟΥ ΗΙ ΒΑ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΑ on the other side.<sup>2</sup> Now a coin of Agrippa is also known which has the bust of Domitian encircled by the inscription ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑ - - ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝ with on the reverse side Nike, her left foot on a helm, and writing on a helm hanging from a palm tree, with the inscription ΤΟΚΒΑCΙΑ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΑΕ. The E after Agrippa probably belongs together with the T and so indicates the year. The year is therefore 0x, which in irregular order probably indicates the 29th year, thus giving the year 89 A.D. So we find on this coin the palm tree, which always stands beside Nike on Roman coins minted in Caesarea after the suppression of the Jewish revolt—in other words the “Judea capta” coins bearing the portraits of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. The palm then symbolizes the conquered Judea. That is why this coin from 89 A.D. probably should be referred to as follows: “We have here the first clear proof that Agrippa II, king of the Jews, minted a coin showing Nike-goddess of Victory—with the palm-tree symbol of Judea, in commemoration of the Roman victory over his own country and his own people”.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 241, Plate XXVI, No. 12.

<sup>2</sup> A. Reifenberg, Unpublished and Unusual Jewish Coins, IEJ 1950-1951, p. 177. There mention is made of a similar coin from 79 A.D.

<sup>3</sup> J. Meyshan, A New Coin Type of Agrippa II and its Meaning, IEJ



Needless to say such coins aroused the deep hatred of the Jews, especially because of the use made by the Jewish rulers of heathen symbols. Involuntarily there must have grown an aversion to the inscriptions in Greek or Latin on those coins. It is striking that coins minted by the Jews during the first and second revolt bear inscriptions in Hebrew only, for example on the coins during the first revolt *חרות ציון*, on those during the second *לחרות ירושלם*, or such and such a year *לגאולת ישראל* or the name *שמעון*.<sup>1</sup> As for the last-mentioned period, data already known have been reconfirmed by the discovery of a coin bearing the name Simeon and the expression "for the liberation (of Jerusalem)" in Hebrew characters.<sup>2</sup>

Many coins therefore bear testimony to a far-reaching adaptation on the part of various Jewish rulers to their heathen environment. The use of Greek in the inscriptions on the coins is a further testimonial. No doubt they were not alone in their endeavours at assimilation. Needless to say such an attitude aroused fierce opposition in wide circles of Jewry. The disappearance of Greek from the legends on Jewish coins during the first and second revolt can certainly be taken to indicate such. Nevertheless, whether they wanted them or not, the Jews for centuries were regularly confronted with coins bearing Greek inscriptions. In this way too they were constantly reminded that this was the current language in the world to which they belonged. And even if the Jews in Palestine often paid little heed to these inscriptions, and even if seeing them did not necessarily mean being able to read and understand them,

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1961, p. 183; cf. *Antiquity and Survival*, Vol. II no. 2-3, 1957, pp. 231 et seq.; on p. 228 a reproduction of a coin of Agrippa II of the Nike type is given (Fig. 23); Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 274 calls the coins of Agrippa I and Agrippa II "frankly pagan" and goes on: "To them, as their coins show, all that mattered was to please their Roman masters with the pagan designs on their coins". In itself the palm tree is not necessarily the symbol of the conquered Judea. It was also on a bronze coin of Bar-Cochba which was found not so long ago, IEJ 1962, p. 179.

<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions on coins from the first revolt are reproduced in A. Reifenberg, *Ancient Jewish Coins*, <sup>2</sup>1947, Nos. 137-151, from the second revolt Nos. 163-207; cf. also Phoenix, Bulletin published by the Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap "Ex Oriente Lux" XI, 1, 1965, pp. 200 et seq.; numerous coins from the period of the first revolt, including many of a type hitherto unknown were found during excavations at Masada, IEJ 1965, pp. 16, 17, 24, 26, 35, 36, 40, 66, 68, 72 et seq., 74, 76, 78, 79, 80 et seq., 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 93, 95, 118; cf. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1964, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 179, in an article by N. Avigad, Expedition A-Naḥal David, *ib.*, pp. 169-183.

such inscriptions must have formed the object of interest especially when they were fiercely contested.

The use of Greek in diverse texts taken from synagogues might also rightly be accounted an indication of the Graecizing of Jewry in Palestine in certain periods. If the founders or builders of the synagogue were mentioned, or the people specially responsible for financing its construction, or if for one reason or another certain people were commemorated in the building, this often was done in Greek. Several examples were already known and their number has been considerably increased during recent excavations. Some of those long known as well as the more recent ones are mentioned below.

In 1950 3 Greek inscriptions were published which come from the synagogue of Caesarea. One of them is a dedicatory inscription which, though damaged, can be reconstructed with a large degree of certainty: *κύριος βοηθός πορα τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπη Μαρουθᾶ*.<sup>1</sup> Very likely Marouthas was the archisynagogos. It is practically certain that *λαός* refers to the congregation.

A bilingual inscription was found in Gaza which very probably came originally from a synagogue. It was found on a pillar of an old church dedicated to John the Baptist, but the seven-branched candle stick above the inscription indicates it came originally from a synagogue. Moreover on either side can be discerned the well-known Jewish emblems of ethrog and shophar. Under *הנחיה בר יעקב* is written in Greek *Ανανίας υἱὸς Ιακώ*. Apparently this is the name of the man who contributed a pillar to the building of the synagogue.<sup>2</sup>

During excavations several Greek inscriptions from the synagogue of Askalon were recovered. One of them is rather lengthy and, although damaged to some extent, it can clearly be discerned that several persons are mentioned in it who contributed in some way to the building or furnishing of the synagogue. Twice it is said that this took place *ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ζωῆν*. It resulted in their salvation and this consisted in life being given to them. Again menorahs, shophar, lulab, and ethrog clearly indicate that the inscriptions come from a synagogue.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Schwabe, *A Marx Jubilee Volume*, 1950, Hebrew part, pp. 441-449; Dr. B. Lifshitz suggests *προσφορά* should be read instead of *πορα*, ZDPV, 1962, p. 81; cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 263; cf. R.B. 1965, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II no. 967; on p. 155 a reproduction is given; Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II, no. 964; the fact that certain sums are referred to is manifest

In clear, Greek capital can be read the texts in the synagogue of Beth-Alpha, which commemorates the builders. After replacing a few vowels, it runs as follows: Μνησθῶσιν οἱ τεχνῖται οἱ κάμνοντες το ἔργον τοῦτο Μαριανὸς καὶ Ἀνινὰς υἱός.<sup>1</sup>

Long ago was known the inscription on one of the pillars of the synagogue of Capernaum: Ἡρώδης Μονίμου (or: Μοκίμου) καὶ Ἰοῦστος υἱὸς ἄμα τοῖς τέκνοις ἔκτισαν τὸν κίονα.<sup>2</sup>

Discoveries are still being made of such testimonials to the use of Greek in synagogues. A few examples of these follow. Of recent date is the finding of two dedicatory inscriptions in the synagogue of Hulda in Palestine. A mosaic inscription, flanked by the well-known Jewish symbols of the menorah, the shophar, the lulab, the ethrog, runs as follows: Εὐλογία τῷ λαῷ. The terms εὐλογία, εὐλογεῖν, and εὐλογητός are found again and again in such Jewish inscriptions. There the term εὐλογία is used in a salutation to the local congregation designated λαός in these inscriptions as in the aforementioned from the synagogue of Caesarea. The other inscription found in this synagogue of Hulda commemorates three people who "founded" it: Εὐτυχῶς Εὐστοχίῳ καὶ Ἡσυχίῳ καὶ Εὐαγρίῳ τοῖς κτίστας.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise of importance are the inscriptions found a short while ago in a synagogue in the vicinity of Tiberias, which were evidently placed in memory of several people who contributed to the costs of a mosaic floor in the synagogue and probably also in the building of the synagogue as well. They are reproduced here in the form and sequence given in an article by Lifshitz: <sup>4</sup>

I Μάξιμος εὐχόμενος ἐποίησεν. ζήση. II Ἀβουδέμος εὐχόμενος ἐποίησεν. III Ζωῖλος εὐχόμενος ἐποίησεν. ζήση. IV Ἰοῦλλος προνούμενος παντα ἐτέλεσε V Καλλίνικος εὐχόμενος ἐποίησεν. ζήση VI Εἰορτάσις εὐχόμενος ἐποίησεν. σῶς ἔστω. VII Σευῆ[ρος] θρεπτὸς τῶν λαμπρο-

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from the reproduction in full of προσφέρωμεν, and προσήνεγκα probably correctly reconstructed in two places in the inscription; cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, pp. 219 et seq.

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, no. 1166; a reproduction is given on p. 216; similarly the Greek text in Frey's reconstruction.

<sup>2</sup> CIJ II, no. 983; also the text Th.W. VII, p. 813.

<sup>3</sup> In an article by B. Lifshitz, Weitere Beiträge zur palästinischen Epigraphik, ZDPV, June 1963, pp. 91-93.

<sup>4</sup> B. Lifshitz, Die Entdeckung einer alten Synagoge bei Tiberias, ZDPV June 1962, pp. 180 et seq.; the Greek texts on pp. 181 et seq.; cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* XII, p. 45.

τάτων VIII Πατριαρχῶν ἐποίησεν·εὐλογία αὐτῶ·ἀμήν. IX [ὁ δεινα  
εὐχομ]ενος ἐποίησεν. ζήση.

Seven people are mentioned by name here. Originally an eighth was mentioned, but this name has been lost, because the first two lines are missing in one of the 9 rectangles containing these texts. It appears that, in general, a fixed formula was used in these inscriptions. It is perhaps interesting to note the particulars given about a few of the donors. If VII and VIII are supposed to be read together—and this is clearly intended—then it is said of one of the donors that he was brought up in the house of the patriarchs, as one of the family. This is probably the meaning of the term, though other interpretations of this word are not lacking. It is sometimes averred that the reference here is to the patriarchs of the Old Testament. The addition of λαμπρότατοι, however, could quite plausibly testify to the respect felt for the patriarchs of Palestine. It was considered worth while to mention specifically that a donor had been brought up in such an environment. Other special, additional remarks could indicate that the people in question occupied eminent positions in their Jewish milieu. It is said of Jullos that he προνο(ο)ύμενος παντα ἐτέλεσε. The term προνο(ο)ύμενος could imply that during part or all of his life he fulfilled a special function in the congregation, comparable to that of a φροντιστής mentioned in several inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> The obvious assumption is that men who played such an important role in the building of the synagogue most probably belonged to the leading circles of local Jewry. Then it would appear from these texts that in such circles Greek was often used for inscriptions and hence was probably often spoken.

So we see that Greek inscriptions were often to be found in synagogues in the Jewish country. Now this phenomenon would be extremely important for our present subject if it could be ascertained that it occurred in the first century A.D. or even earlier. Much therefore depends on the dating of these inscriptions. Opinions have differed on this point, but agreement about the synagogues of a certain architectural style is increasing. Some have wanted to attribute a very early date, the first century, to an inscription from the synagogue of Capernaum which has long been known. Some scholars even maintain that the building of which the remains were found in Capernaum was the synagogue built by the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Lifshitz, *ib.*, p. 184.

centurion (Luke 7:4 et seq.). But since more synagogues of this architectural type have been investigated, it has been decided that they must all be dated in the same period, namely the last part of the second and the first part of the third century. Kohl and Watzinger very concretely formulate as the result of their investigations "that the Galilean constructions have a homogeneous origin and must belong for the major part to *one* generation; that indigenous masterbuilders built, according to the design of a Syrian architect, new synagogues for the Jewish congregations of Galilee at the orders and expense of Roman emperors, of which the architectural style and ornamentation remained standard for the succeeding period as well".<sup>1</sup> This dating of the Galilean synagogues at the end of the second and beginning of the third century A.D. at the earliest has gradually won over almost general support.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes it is assumed that the synagogue at Capernaum was built on the site of an older, more simple type, but Sukenik says that he excavated to a depth of 6 m. at a certain spot on the site and found not a single vestige of an earlier building.<sup>3</sup>

Although conclusions about when a building was erected can often be drawn from the style of architecture and the ornamentations, absolute certainty and exactitude cannot always be achieved with their help. Others have believed that something can be deduced from the Greek wording of the inscriptions. According to Lifshitz, for example, in the aforesaid inscription from Hulda the word εὐτυχῶς used in combination with personal names indicates a later date, and the term κτίσται, which is used for the first time here as honorary title in a Jewish inscription, often occurs in Greek epigraphs from the late imperial age and the Byzantine period.<sup>4</sup>

As criterion for dating, the occurrence of mosaic floors in a synagogue is often applied. These floors are very probably of a later date than the paved floors, for in some synagogues a mosaic floor has been superimposed on an older paved one. This change probably occurred between the third and the fourth centuries,

<sup>1</sup> H. Kohl und C. Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galilea*, 1916, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> For example Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 181, XII, p. 44 et seq.; C. Kopp, *Die heiligen Stätten der Evangelien*, 1959, pp. 215 et seq.; Th.W. VII, pp. 815 et seq. In the last-mentioned article, note III on συναγωγή, those who attribute an earlier date to the building of this synagogue are mentioned, e.g. Schürer, *Str. Bill.*, Rosenau, Orfali, Meistermann.

<sup>3</sup> Kopp, *op. cit.*, p. 216, Note 5.

<sup>4</sup> Lifshitz, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

though sometimes gradually, of course. Therefore synagogues with mosaic floors are usually reckoned to be not older than the end of the third century and actually often one to three centuries later.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to the aforesaid inscriptions, the dating thus arrived at is as follows: the synagogue in Caesarea was built at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>2</sup> The inscription of Gaza and that of Capernaum were probably the oldest ones. They date from the second or third century.<sup>3</sup> The inscription from Askalon could be dated exactly if it were known for sure to which calendar the number (ἑτους) Θψ refers. These two letters designate the number 709. If this figure is related to the numbering of the Seleucid era, the year is 397 A.D., if it is a year of the Askalon era, then it could be 604 A.D. The latter year is preferred by some because of the form of the letters and the style of the inscription.<sup>4</sup> The mosaic floor in the synagogue of Beth Alpha can be dated rather accurately, even though it is not quite certain which emperor is mentioned on it. In any case it must be placed in the sixth century A.D.<sup>5</sup> The inscription of Hulda dates from the fifth century A.D. The inscriptions of Tiberias were found in a synagogue which very likely was built in the fourth century A.D.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently a few of these Greek texts are very old, though not one is likely to be older than the second century A.D. And there is absolutely no certainty about when exactly it became customary to use Greek inscriptions in synagogues. If the provenance of an inscription from Kasjun in northern Galilee could be established beyond doubt, it would be of great significance in this respect. It runs: ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας των κυριων ημων αυτοκρατόρω [ν] καισάρων Α. Σεπτ. Σεουή[ρου] Εύσεβ. Περτ. σεβ. και Μ. Αύρ. 'Α[ντωνε] λνου [και Α. Σεπτ. Γ]έτα, υἱὼν αὐ[τοῦ ἐξ] εὐχῆς 'Ιουδαιων.

<sup>1</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 263; the conclusion reached by M. Weippert in his annual communication is: "Die Synagoge ist wohl in der zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jrhs. zerstört und im frühen 5. Jrh. wieder aufgebaut worden". He attaches great importance for the dating to the finding of a great number of copper coins on the site, M. Weippert, *Archäologischer Jahresbericht*, ZDPV 1964, pp. 156 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II, no. 967.

<sup>4</sup> CIJ II, no. 964; Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, pp. 220, 238.

<sup>5</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 181; cf. R.B. 1967, pp. 306 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> Lifshitz, ZDPV 1962, p. 180; M. Weippert ZDPV 1964, p. 160; R.B. 1963, pp. 588 et seq. = IEJ 1962, pp. 153 et seq.; J. Voskuil, *Israel, traditie en vernieuwing*, 1964, pp. 39 et seq., 42 et seq.; M. A. Beek, *Israel*, 1962, pp. 159 et seq.

Furthermore, καὶ Ἰουλίας Δόμνης Σεβ[αστῆς] is written on the left-hand side.<sup>1</sup> This, then, is an inscription in honour of emperor Septimius Severus and his entire family which can be dated precisely in 197 A.D. Now it is known that long before then synagogues in Egypt were dedicated to temporal rulers. Several instances could be mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The question is whether this dedicatory inscription comes from a synagogue or a heathen temple. No one knows for certain from which building it originally came. If it belonged in a synagogue, it probably was a testimonial of the very loyal attitude of leading Jewish circles, to which a few references can be found in the Talmud, and of the benevolence of the emperor in reply to this loyalty. Opinions differ, however. Moreover some insert ἐξ before εὐχῆς, as above, but others προς. The latter would definitely indicate that this inscription came from a synagogue. But even if this dedicatory inscription were originally placed in a temple, it would at least testify that Jews had commissioned the use of Greek in the text.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the objections raised by Kohl and Watzinger to the hypothesis that the inscription originally came from a synagogue, this seems to me to be the most plausible one. I believe it is more likely that the Jews in Galilee wished to honour a ruler who was favourably inclined towards them by placing an inscription in their synagogue—as frequently happened in Egypt according to many passages in the writings of Philo—than that Jews in the Jewish country had such an inscription placed in their name in a heathen temple.

The earliest synagogue inscription found in Palestine is that uncovered by R. Weill on the hill Ophel to the south of the old Jerusalem during a campaign in 1913-1914. The inscription has been reproduced and discussed times without number. It runs as follows:

Θ[ε] ὁδοτος Οὐεττήνου, ἱερεὺς καὶ  
 ἀ[ρ]χισυνάγωγος, υἱὸς ἀρχισυν αἰγώ-  
 γ[ο]υ, υἱωνὸς ἀρχισυν [α]γώγου, ᾠκο-  
 δόμησε τὴν συναγωγὴν εἰς ἀν[άγν]ω-  
 σ[ι]ν νόμου καὶ εἰς [δ]ιδασκαλ[ί]αν ἐντολῶν, καὶ

<sup>1</sup> This text can be found, inter alia, in Kohl-Watzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 209; CIJ II, no. 972, p. 158; Schürer III, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Th.W. VII, p. 825.

<sup>3</sup> In any case it can hardly be said: "der jüd. Character der Inschr. ist freilich nicht sicher", Schrage, Th.W. VII p. 825, note 182.

τ[δ]ν ξενῶνα, κα[ὶ] τὰ δώματα καὶ τὰ χρη-  
 σ[τ]ήρια τῶν ὑδάτων, εἰς κατάλυμα τοῖ-  
 ς [χ]ρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξε[ν]ῆς, ἣν ἐθεμε-  
 λ[ίω]σαν οἱ πατέρες [α]υτοῦ καὶ οἱ πρε-  
 σ[β]ύτεροι καὶ Σιμων[ὶ]δης <sup>1</sup>

The common opinion is that this inscription dates from the first century A.D. but before 70. This terminus ad quem is generally agreed upon, because for a long time after that year no Jew was allowed to enter Jerusalem, and therefore a synagogue could not possibly have been built in that city. If this synagogue were therefore founded in the first half of the first century, then chronologically it could possibly be identified with the synagogue of the Libertines mentioned in Act. 6:9. One reason for this identification is taken by some to be the name of the father of Theodotos, Vettenus, whose name apparently goes back to the family of the Vetteni (gens Vettena), which would indicate that he, or one of his forefathers, was a freedman immigrated from Italy.<sup>2</sup> Others, however, refute such an identification.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, all agree that this Greek inscription in a synagogue comes from the first century before 70 A.D. Consequently it is an extremely important document. Theodotos, a man with a Greek name, is both ἱερέυς and ἀρχισυνάγωγος. That means that in the first century A.D. temple and synagogue existed side by side and that this Theodotos, who was head of the synagogue, belonged to a group of priests in Jerusalem. The question is whether his forefathers also belonged to it. All that is said of his father and grandfather is that they were head of the synagogue. Of course this does not preclude their association with the priestly families in Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> The text is reproduced in CIJ II, no. 1404, p. 333; it is also given, for example, in the article by P. Thomsen, *Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem*, ZDPV 1921, p. 143; A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 41923, p. 379 (as in Frey, including a reproduction of the inscription); Th.W. VII, p. 811, Note 85. References are made by these authors also to the older, and by Frey and Schrage also to the newer works on this inscription.

<sup>2</sup> This line of reasoning was given already by L. H. Vincent, *Découverte de la synagogue des Affranchis à Jérusalem*, R.B. 1921, pp. 247-277. And also by W. F. Albright, *Archäologie in Palästina*, 1962, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> For example Frey, CIJ II, p. 334; E. L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, 1930, pp. 69 et seq.; Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 179. Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 380, thinks it "nicht unmöglich, aber mir nicht wahrscheinlich". Cf. also J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*, 31962, p. 76.



The father of Teodotos derived his name from the Roman gens Vettina. It was from such a group, belonging to the leading Jewish circles in Jerusalem, that the order was given to set up this dedicatory inscription in Greek in a synagogue. Since the synagogue is said to have been built for the purpose of εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν νόμου καὶ εἰς διδασχὴν ἐντολῶν, this must almost certainly mean that in this synagogue the Law was read and the commandments taught in Greek. At the end of the inscription mention is once more made of οἱ πατέρες αὐτοῦ, the forefathers of Theodotos, among those who laid the foundations of this synagogue. These must therefore have been eminent Jewish personages who for generations had played an important role in Jerusalem and who evidently were somewhat cosmopolitan in make-up.

This inscription demonstrates that in the first century A.D., before 70, Greek was used as a matter of course in certain leading Jewish circles, was probably also spoken regularly and was used in some of the synagogues in that city. Some have found this so strange that they rejected Jerusalem as place of origin and ascribed the tablet to a different region, for instance Caesarea. In that case it was only used as supplementary material in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Quite obviously, however, such an assumption is merely an hypothesis unsupported by facts and offered only because it proceeds from the belief that such a degree of knowledge and use of Greek would have been impossible at that time in the very heart of the Jewish land.

Adjoining this synagogue were a guest-chamber ξενῶν, bath chambers τὰ δώματα καὶ τὰ χρηστήρια τῶν ὑδάτων set aside for pilgrims, εἰς κατάλυμα τοῖς χρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξενῆς. This does not necessarily imply that the synagogue was for the use of foreigners only. It is known from the Talmud that an inn was often annexed to a synagogue to accomodate guests from distant parts. Rabbis are said to have lodged there frequently.<sup>2</sup> Hence it cannot be argued that the inscription in this synagogue was written in Greek, because it was destined exclusively for Jews of the diaspora who knew only Greek.

In my opinion this inscription proves irrefutably that, even in the first century A.D., a precise boundary line could not be drawn between a hellenised Jewry, as in Egypt for example, and

<sup>1</sup> This theory is upheld by Th. Reinach, *L'inscription de Theodotus*, *Revue des études juives*, 1920, pp. 55 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> TB Pes. 101a, TP. Meg. III, 74a, cf. Str. B. IV, p. 144; Th. W. VII, p. 824.

a completely non-hellenised Jewry in Palestine. Although the degree of Hellenisation differed in the two regions, it would be wrong to conceive of Jewry in the Jewish country of the first century as being hermetically sealed off from Greek infiltration. And that certainly applies to the language as well. Hence what Goodenough says about this inscription is quite plausible: "We do not know what type of Judaism was taught in this synagogue but there is no reason to suppose that Philo would not have been an honored speaker there on his trips to Jerusalem, or that his writings would have been strange to the members of the congregation".<sup>1</sup>

So in widely differing periods Greek inscriptions were regularly placed in the synagogues of Palestine. Various examples of this have been given above. Naturally this does not mean that only Greek texts were to be found in those synagogues. Several texts in Hebrew or Aramaic have also been preserved. The coincidence of the various languages sometimes gives rise to very special questions. In the synagogue of Beth-Alpha, for instance, there was found not only the Greek inscription commemorating the builders, Marianus and his son Hanina, but also one in Aramaic, though in a poor state of preservation and therefore hardly intelligible. Its text was probably something like the following: "This mosaic was laid down in the . . . year of emperor Justinus". Furthermore mention was perhaps made in Aramaic of diverse gifts for the building. But this section is practically illegible.

These two inscriptions, the Greek and the Aramaic, are placed side by side at the northern entrance, in front of the large mosaic. Hebrew words and names are worked into the mosaic. In the representation of Abraham's offer, Abraham's name is written above his head and Isaac above that of his son. Behind Abraham can be seen a ram tied to a tree, with the inscription: Here is the ram. A hand stretching forth from heaven writes: Lay not thine hand. . . (Gen. 22:12). All this is written in Hebrew. In the middle section of the mosaic, which depicts the zodiac with four female heads in the corners representing the four seasons, the names of the signs of the zodiac and the four seasons are written in Hebrew.

What must be inferred from the contiguous occurrence of Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew? This question cannot readily be answered. Some scholars have drawn conclusions from the shape of the two

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<sup>1</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 180.

inscriptions. Sukenik, for example, considers the Aramaic characters badly shaped and hence deduces that they were probably made by a Greek-speaking Jew who did not come from Palestine. The Greek characters of the other inscription are faultlessly designed. They are carefully spaced. Other scholars consider the Aramaic characters in no way misshapen. Moreover, precisely the rather carefree design and smooth joining up of the Aramaic characters could indicate that the makers of this inscription were very familiar with that language, whereas the almost childish tidiness of the Greek characters could indicate that the makers of the inscription knew scarcely any Greek and therefore painstakingly copied it from a specimen given them. Hence little can be inferred with any degree of certainty from the shape of the letters in the two inscriptions.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, the occurrence alongside each other of a Greek and an Aramaic inscription in the synagogue of Beth-Alpha is very remarkable indeed. Were the local donors commemorated in Aramaic because they spoke this language mainly? And is the text dedicated to the memory of the builders composed in Greek because they spoke Greek? Was Greek only used in honour of people who were known to speak Greek? The latter is not very probable. The least that can be inferred from the Greek of this inscription is that the Jews who visited the synagogue could also read and understand this language.

Perhaps somewhat more can be deduced from a similar occurrence alongside each other of Greek and Hebrew in the synagogue of Tiberias, which was excavated not so long ago. The rather lengthy inscription commemorating a few eminent people who were concerned with the building of the synagogue and the laying of the mosaic floor is mentioned above. The mosaic floor in this synagogue also has a representation of the signs of the zodiac encircling the sun-chariot, with the four seasons in the corners. Here, too, can clearly be discerned the Jewish symbols, the ark of the Law, the seven-branched candle-stick, the ethrog, the lulab, the shophar, the machta—more than in the synagogue of Beth-Alpha, where only the ark of the Law and the seven-branched candle-stick are depicted. The names of the signs of the Zodiac are similarly given in Hebrew, as are the names of the seasons, Nisan, Tammuz, Tischri and Tebet.

Why is it that the Hebrew occurs in this form in the synagogue and that not only the aforesaid inscription but the great majority

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 243.

of all the inscriptions found there are written in Greek? Perhaps in reply to this question reference might be made to a few details which would seem to point in a certain direction. One of the Greek inscriptions mentions an elder called Profuturos, who built one of the halls. It contains only one Hebrew word: šalôm.<sup>1</sup> This could indicate that such a widely known Hebrew word was always preserved, even when that language was no longer properly known or regularly spoken. Secondly it is noticeable that the Greek of the inscription is faultless, but that the style of the Hebrew writing of the names of the signs of the zodiac is rather childish and, what is more important, one of the names of the signs is written from left to right, contrary to what is correct.<sup>2</sup> This could indicate that the Jews in Tiberias at that time were hellenised to a great extent, the indications being not only the portrayal of the sun-god Helios, the signs of the zodiac and the seasons, but also the linguistic usage. Such a serious mistake in the writing of Hebrew implies that this language was no longer well known in common practice. It is possible, nevertheless, that this lack of familiarity with Hebrew must not be ascribed to those who commissioned the mosaic, but to those who made it. During excavations at Arad in 1962 a bowl was found bearing words in early Hebrew-Phoenician writing, in some of which the sequence of the letters is incorrect. In this instance, too, it has been suggested that the mistake was made by an uneducated labourer.<sup>3</sup> One can only wonder why the employers allowed such an obvious mistake to stand, if they recognized it as such. That is why I believe the most plausible explanation to be that this contrast in the accuracy of Greek and Hebrew definitely does bear testimony to a lack of knowledge of Hebrew in certain Jewish circles in Palestine at the time when this synagogue was founded, namely in the fourth century A.D.

In itself, the bilinguality of texts in synagogues could mean that the Greek version was added for non-Jewish visitors. But this is not particularly likely. It is hardly feasible that the Jews would have placed Greek texts in their synagogues for the benefit of the occasional heathen visitor. It is much more likely that the Jews themselves could read and understand Greek very well and

<sup>1</sup> R.B. 1963, p. 589 = IEJ 1962, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> J. Voskuil, *op. cit.*, p. 42; M. A. Beek, *op. cit.*, pp. 158 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Y. Aharoni and Ruth Amiran, *Excavations at Tel Arad*, IEJ 1964, pp. 138 et seq.

that the Hebrew and Aramaic words were engraved in the synagogue as manifestation of the adherence to a certain tradition. However, I doubt whether one can go so far as to compare this with the present-day university diplomas in Latin awarded to graduates who do not always have a thorough knowledge of Latin, or whether Goodenough is right in saying "the Jews who went to the synagogues themselves admired the Aramaic or Hebrew but read the Greek."<sup>1</sup> The only texts which provide stronger indications on this point are, I believe, those of the ossuaries and those from the caves around the Dead Sea.

Naturally the relationships between the languages in Palestine did not remain unchanged throughout the centuries. These must have varied in accordance with the general attitude to foreign influences. Sometimes traces can be found that the Jews themselves were aware of the changes in attitude. In a tractate of the Jerusalem Talmud, Abodah Zarah, it is said of Abun, a rabbi from the fourth century A.D., that he did not prevent the new custom of depicting representations in mosaic. It is questionable whether the attitude of such a rabbi really was of such great importance and whether this communication can be used as criterion for dating mosaics in the synagogues, in the sense that the period when this rabbi lived can obtain as a terminus a quo. Nevertheless it is a fact that the mosaic floors in the synagogues, which came after the paved floors, are usually dated as from the end of the third century and up to the sixth century.<sup>2</sup>

The development in the construction of the synagogue in Tiberias proves that in the fifth or sixth century there began a period in which the mosaic floor, which has now been excavated, was probably looked upon as the sign of an unauthorized infiltration of heathen motifs in the synagogue. When the synagogue was being built on top of the recently uncovered mosaic floor, apparently no account whatsoever was taken of this mosaic. It was probably covered with a layer of earth and rubble, so that it could no longer cause any annoyance, and it was bisected by a wall of the new synagogue. So it was recovered intact from under the layer of earth, but damaged in the middle. It is quite possible that such a reaction to heathen designs affected the linguistic relationships, although I believe that

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<sup>1</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* II, p. 123; cf. XII, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, pp. 238 et seq.

the state of affairs in the time of Bar-Cochba shows that a violent outburst of Jewish nationalism did not necessarily result in a radical rejection of the use of Greek. But more of this later.

The funerary inscriptions in Palestine, like those in the diaspora, are of great import. In the Jewish country a few sarcophagi or marble plaques have also been found which evidently belonged in origin to a grave, but by far the major part of the funerary inscriptions come from ossuaries, hundreds of which have been found. These are coffers in which the bones of the deceased were preserved. The deceased were first buried in kokim or loculi, and after decomposition of the body the bones were removed from the grave, to make room for another deceased. It has been suggested that they were used for other purposes, for example to hold the bones of diaspora Jews, which were transported in this way to Palestine for their burial, or of Jewish martyrs, or for storing valuables. But these hypotheses have now been abandoned, and the consensus of opinion is that they were used for holding the bones of deceased who were first buried elsewhere.

Hundreds of these ossuaries have been found in Palestine, and, although not nearly all bear an inscription, there are very many on which something is engraved. Often nothing more than the name of the person whose bones are stored inside, followed by the name of the father. Occasionally a little more is added in the inscription about the deceased. Possibly the extant ossuaries automatically represent a certain selection as far as social stratum is concerned. Various times nails have been found which probably come from wooden ossuaries, of which the wood has entirely rotted away. It is therefore possible that there once was a great number of them and that they were used by poor, simple folk. The stone ossuaries still extant would then have belonged to the more well-to-do social classes, and then it would not be at all surprising that the additional remarks in a few cases almost always testify to a certain repute in society or synagogue.

The following remarks about the funerary inscriptions in Palestine therefore refer almost exclusively to those on the ossuaries. A complete list of the hundreds found has yet to be drawn up. A selection has been made, the ones chosen being from Beth Shearim and Jerusalem in particular.

The remarkable finds in Beth Shearim were made during the

excavations of 1936 to 1940 and 1953 to 1956. Beth Shearim became an important centre of Jewry in Palestine and beyond mainly after Jerusalem became forbidden territory for the Jews after the revolt of Bar-Cochba. Its importance was greatly enhanced when rabbi Juda I lived and worked there at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century A.D. He compiled the Mishnah and was known as the spiritual leader of Jewry in his day.

Here extensive excavations have been carried out. On top of the hill, the ruins of various buildings have been uncovered, including the synagogue and several inscriptions in it. But of much greater significance for our subject are the finds made during the excavations of a huge complex of funerary chambers hewn out of the rocks on the hillsides. Some were probably intended as family graves and others as public ones. Twenty-six of these catacombs were found, some of which contained more than 400 graves. The latter included sarcophagi, which are bigger than ossuaries, and several were in the catacomb discovered in 1953. Practically all of them proved to have been ransacked by grave-plunderers. In the large catacomb number 20, all coffins and all niches where remains were buried had evidently been emptied of their contents, and so we know hardly anything at all about what used to be laid in them. Inscriptions were sometimes damaged in the process of plundering, but nevertheless a great many have been left intact.

Needless to say the exact date is seldom known of the separate inscriptions found in Beth Shearim. Occasionally a possible clue is provided by a name. The catacomb discovered in 1953, for example, contained Hebrew funerary inscriptions in which the names of Rabbi Simeon and Rabbi Gamaliel are mentioned. These were perhaps two sons of Rabbi Juda I, and therefore this rabbi could possibly have been buried here. If so, this would provide an approximate date for these graves. On the whole, however, such criteria are lacking. Nonetheless there is general and broad agreement as to the chronology. The year 352 A.D. is considered to be the *terminus ad quem*, the year in which the town was thoroughly devastated during the Jewish revolt under Constantius Gallus. The *terminus a quo* is more difficult to determine even approximately. Sometimes these funerary inscriptions are thought to date from the third and fourth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>, sometimes the second to the fourth

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<sup>1</sup> For example Lifshitz, ZDPV, June 1962, p. 78.

century A.D.<sup>1</sup> Once it has even been emphatically asserted that this Jewish necropolis dates from the first four centuries of our era.<sup>2</sup> In that case these funerary chambers are not exclusively dated after the radical changes that must have taken place in Palestine Jewry owing to the definite suppression of the revolt of Bar-Cochba and the resultant effect on Jerusalem as centre of Jewry. Although I do not believe it absolutely impossible that some of these funerary inscriptions date from the first century, even if the earliest date from the end of the second century, they form an important indication of the linguistic relationships in Palestine in a period close to the century with which we are occupied in particular.

Now it has been argued that the size of this necropolis indicates that it could not possibly have been intended only for such a small town as Beth Shearim.<sup>3</sup> Since the highly esteemed Rabbi Juda I lived and worked there and was probably buried there as well, not only Jews from Palestine, but from the surrounding countries would have felt it an honour to be buried there. There is an allusion of this nature in the Talmud. And since the Mount of Olives could not be used as burial ground after the revolt of Bar-Cochba, the diaspora Jews who wished to be buried in the holy land are said to have preferred Beth Shearim.

It is true that funerary inscriptions were found in the necropolis of Beth Shearim which indicate that some of those who were buried there had come from outside Palestine. Mention is made, for example, of Jews of Araba, Calliope of Byblos, Aristas the Sidonian, the banker of Palmyra, Aidesias the head of the council of elders, a man from Antioch, the priest of Berytus, the archisynagogos of Berytus, of Tyre, of Pamphilia. These, however, comprise only a small proportion of the hundreds of funerary inscriptions which have been found. Hence there are no grounds for concluding from the occurrence of this small number of names of diaspora Jews that important Jewish people from everywhere in the diaspora were brought for burial to Beth Shearim and that this is the only explanation of the large number of graves there. Considering deceased

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<sup>1</sup> For example Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 91; N. Avigad in an article entitled The Beth-She'arim Necropolis, in *Antiquity and Survival*, 1957, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Frey, *CIJ* II, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> N. Avigad, *op. cit.*, p. 247; cf. G. Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 90<sup>II</sup>.



were buried at this place during many centuries, the size of the number need give no cause whatsoever for surprise.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly this question is relevant to our subject. If a great many Jews buried in Beth Shearim came from the diaspora, their funerary inscriptions would be more likely to testify to the language spoken and understood outside Palestine than to the language spoken in part of the Jewish land. If, however, it is presupposed that in Beth Shearim mainly Jews from that place itself and the immediate vicinity were buried, then the occurrence of different languages in the inscriptions would indicate the state of affairs in part of the Jewish land. Assuming the latter, the manifold occurrence of Greek in the funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim is highly significant. In the catacomb uncovered during the 1955 excavation season, the number of Hebrew inscriptions exceeds that of the Greek ones, but that is an exception. The same author who mentions this exception, describes the rule as : "Only a few of the inscriptions are written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The great majority is written in Greek". And his conclusion is rightly that this ratio demonstrates the great influence of Hellenistic culture in the first centuries of the Christian era, an influence, moreover, which is clearly demonstrated by the style of architecture, reliefs, and paintings in the catacombs, which originated in Graeco-Roman art.<sup>2</sup> Goodenough, who fully realizes that it is still too early to make any definitive pronouncements on this point, nevertheless mentions as an established fact that in Beth Shearim there are almost four Greek inscriptions to one in a Semitic language, no matter which one.<sup>3</sup> The fifth excavation season in Beth Shearim produced 37 inscriptions, 33 of which in Greek.<sup>4</sup>

If this frequent use of Greek in the inscriptions is indeed considered characteristic of the linguistic relationships prevailing in Galilee at that time, then certain consequences ensue as regards the interpretation of certain phenomena. On the wall of a passage leading into one of the catacombs have been scratched a few Greek texts. One runs: *θαροῦτε πατέρες ὅσοι οὐδὲς ἀθάνατος*, the other: *εὐτυχῶς τῇ ὑμῶν ἀναστάσι*. Does this mean that visitors from

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 90<sup>197</sup>, 91<sup>207</sup>; B. Lifshitz, R.B. 1965, pp. 529 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> N. Avigad, *op. cit.* p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> Goodenough, *op. cit.* II, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> R.B. 1961, p. 401.

outside the place gave general expression to their feelings of sorrow and consolation in this way, or were these the words of relatives of the dead of Beth Shearim itself or the immediate vicinity? Apart from whether πατέρες ὁσίοι means "holy fathers" or "pious parents", I believe it most probable that these Greek texts were placed there by relatives from Beth Shearim or the surrounding area.<sup>1</sup> The diaspora Jews from afar were certainly not the only ones who gave vent to their feelings like this in Greek, the local people themselves often did so primarily in that language.

If some inscriptions in Beth Shearim are bilingual—Hebrew or Aramaic on the one side and Greek on the other—are both languages placed side by side as complete equivalents, or is one secondary? And if so, which one? If Greek is used on the majority of the tombstones and ossuaries, this is a strong indication that Greek was mainly spoken in that region and that consequently the Semitic language had become the secondary one for many people, though still used as a sacred language in the funerary inscriptions. Then there can be no question of Greek in which were mingled many Hebrew words and certainly not of a jargon comprised of two languages.<sup>2</sup> Of course this need not imply that Hebrew or Aramaic had become a rigidified language for everyone in that place. If, for example, it is mentioned in Hebrew in a certain mortuary chamber that it is specially reserved for the interment of priests, then this must have been understood by many who read it, but it is remarkable that another one has a bilingual inscription with the Greek ἐστέων in addition to the Hebrew כוהנים. In any case it was apparently necessary to reproduce this well-known Hebrew word in Greek for the benefit of some people.<sup>3</sup>

Although a great deal of the material from the necropolis of Beth Shearim still has to be classified systematically, it may be concluded from the data available that, in the heart of Galilee and certainly from the second to the fourth century or even earlier, there lived an important Jewish community of which the great majority spoke Greek. This majority was definitely not comprised of a few groups; people of diverse social strata belonged to it.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. N. Avigad, *op. cit.*, p. 261; B. Lifshitz, ZDPV, June 1962, pp. 72 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* II, pp. 122 et seq., I, p. 91, XII, pp. 51 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II, nos. 1002 and 1001; cf. Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 91.

There are more particular reasons why the funerary inscriptions from Jerusalem are very important. In the first place this town was the centre of the Jewish land, the centre too of Jewry in Palestine and the diaspora. It is therefore relevant to investigate whether it can be demonstrated on the grounds of the excavations whether Greek was widely used in this town as well. In the second place, the funerary inscriptions on the ossuaries found in or near Jerusalem possess their own particular significance, because many must be dated with certainty before 70 A.D. Naturally this does not mean that all the Greek inscriptions which were found come from this period. Many come from much later times, from the fifth to eighth centuries or even later. This applies, for example, to many tombstones found in the centre of Jerusalem, in the Hinnom valley, in Silwan, in the Kidron valley.<sup>1</sup> But many are of the opinion that the ossuaries found in and around Jerusalem date from before 70, because after the destruction of the city in that year the Jews were for a long time prohibited from entering it.

"Of the many Jewish graves which have been excavated in the region of Jerusalem", says Albright, "not a single one can be dated after 70 A.D. All the inscriptions on ossuaries found up to now around Jerusalem date from the last century of the second temple (30 B.C.-70 A.D.)."<sup>2</sup> If we bear in mind that this does indeed apply to the ossuaries and not to the tombstones, which sometimes date from a much later period, it is manifest that these ossuaries in particular constitute an important indication of the linguistic relationships in Jerusalem in the first half of the first century, and perhaps the previous century. Even if one hesitates to pronounce on this point with such certainty as Albright and admits of the possibility that some could date from the second century A.D., the ossuaries can still be accounted a testimonial of the continuous use of Greek in the centre of the Jewish land in the first two centuries A.D.<sup>3</sup> And it is striking that all sorts of individual

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Thomsen, *Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem*, ZDPV 1921: from the inner city, pp. 47-54, nos. 87-105, from the Hinnom valley, pp. 54-59, nos. 106-118; from the village Silwan, pp. 59 et seq, nos. 119-121; from the Kidron valley p. 61, nos 122-123; cf. also F. M. Abel, *Épigraphie Palestienne*, R.B. 1925, pp. 575-582.

<sup>2</sup> W. F. Albright, *Archäologie in Palestina*, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> P. Thomsen, ZDPV 1920 pp. 157 et seq., considers the dating of the Greek inscriptions a difficult question. He believes, however, that the second revolt in 135 A.D. was the terminus ad quem and gives 100 B.C.-

finds made in and around Jerusalem in recent years are ever and again dated in the first century A.D. and before 70. Milik, for example, believes that three Jewish graves recently discovered to the south-east of Jerusalem come from the beginning of the christian era.<sup>1</sup> Avigad considers it practically certain that the collection of ossuaries with inscriptions found in the Kidron valley in 1941 date from the first century A.D., before the destruction of the second temple. The type of earthenware, which is characteristic of the Jewish ossuary graves in the vicinity of Jerusalem clearly indicates this period in his opinion.<sup>2</sup> Fishwick believes that the mortuary chamber which was excavated near Talpioth in 1945, a suburb of Jerusalem, dates from the period before the devastation of the town by the Romans, just like the large majority of the graves found in Jerusalem. He rightly bases his opinion on that of Sukenik, the man who for a while was probably the greatest expert on excavation work in Jerusalem. The earthenware found with the ossuaries here is of a type that was very common in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods. But this is not the only indication of

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150 A.D. as the period for the ossuaries in Jerusalem in his 'zeitliche Übersicht der Inschriften', ZDPV 1921, p. 159. About the same time Klein already opined that the ossuary and funerary inscriptions from Jerusalem date from before 70 A.D. at any rate, S. Klein, *Jüdisch-Palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum* (Ossuar-, Grab- und Synagogeninschriften) 1920, p. 2; Goodenough says of the dating of the ossuaries: "The dates to which they have been assigned vary somewhat, but archaeologists have on the whole agreed surprisingly. Ossuaries clearly were used in the first two centuries before Christ and up to the fall of Jerusalem", Goodenough, *op. cit.* I, p. 114, where he refers, inter alia, to the best single review of the subject: L. H. Vincent, *Sur la date des ossuaires juifs*, R.B. 1934, pp. 564-567. Frey, CIJ II, pp. 245 et seq., also makes reference to the conclusions reached in this article: "Leur date générale s'encadre entre 200 av.—200 apr. J.C." and expresses his agreement with it. G. Kittel is of the opinion: "Die aufgefundenen Ossuarien stammen aus der Zeit vom 1. vorchristlichen bis etwa in die Mitte des zweiten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts," G. Kittel, *Die Probleme des palästinischen Spätjudentums und des Urchristentums*, 1926, p. 37<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Milik, *Trois tombeaux juifs récemment découverts au Sud-Est de Jérusalem*, *Studii biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus VII* (1956-1957), 1957, p. 232; the tomb of Jason, probably belonging to a wealthy Jerusalem family, in which one Greek and several Aramaic inscriptions were found, is ascribed on the basis of the archeological data to the time of Alexander Jannaeus, i.e. about the beginning of the first century B.C., cf. IEJ 1967, pp. 61-113; the Aramaic inscriptions pp. 101 et seq., the Greek inscription pp. 112-113.

<sup>2</sup> N. Avigad, *A Depository of inscribed ossuaries in the Kidron Valley*, IEJ 1962, pp. 3, 12.

the period when they were made. The shape of the Greek characters points to the first century A.D. Even more important is the discovery on this site of a coin of Herod Agrippa I, from the sixth year of his reign, i.e. 42-43 A.D. When taken together, these facts make it possible to date this find rather exactly.<sup>1</sup>

So the funerary inscriptions on the ossuaries found in and near Jerusalem are anyhow an important source for our knowledge of the linguistic relationships in that town in the first half of the first century A.D. Needless to say it is hardly possible to arrive at definitive conclusions as long as a complete survey of all data is not available. Thomsen's<sup>2</sup> description of the Latin and Greek inscriptions in Jerusalem and the surrounding area was no doubt practically exhaustive in his time, but so much has been found since 1920 that much would now have to be added to it. Moreover it does not give a comparison with the number of Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions, and the latter are very numerous, though the ratio between the Greek and Hebrew can differ greatly from grave to grave. In his description of the three Jewish graves found to the south-east of Jerusalem, for example, Milik mentions only one bilingual inscription,<sup>3</sup> the rest are in Hebrew. A number of ossuaries found in the Kidron valley in 1924 have almost exclusively Hebrew or Aramaic funerary inscriptions. Only one of them bears a name in Hebrew and in Greek.<sup>4</sup> But each of two ossuaries found on the southern side of the Kidron valley in 1880 mentions a name in Greek.<sup>5</sup> And the Greek inscriptions predominate overwhelmingly on the ossuaries found in the same valley in 1941: 8 have a Greek inscription, 1 is bilingual, and 1 is in Hebrew. Of the 12 personal names 8 are in Greek, 3 are Hebrew names in a Greek transcription and 1 is in Hebrew.<sup>6</sup> So we see that, even in graves located rather close together, the ratio of languages differs greatly. Still the frequent occurrence of Greek is very remarkable here too. This is most

<sup>1</sup> D. Fishwick, *The Talpioth Ossuaries again*, N.T.S., Oct. 1963, pp. 49 et seq.; Sukenik on these excavations: E.L. Sukenik, *The Earliest Records of Christianity*, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 1947, pp. 361-365; E. Dinkler, *Signum Crucis*, 1967, pp. 1 et seq., 27 et seq., 49 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> P. Thomsen, *Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem und ihrer nächsten Umgebung*, ZDPV 1920, pp. 138-161; 1921, pp. 1-61, 90-171.

<sup>3</sup> Milik (see p. 144, note 1), p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> CIJ II nos. 1287-1299, only 1293b is written in Greek.

<sup>5</sup> CIJ II 1302, 1303.

<sup>6</sup> N. Avigad, IEJ 1962, p. 12.

clearly evidenced by the numerical ratios in the most detailed list of the ossuaries in Jerusalem as yet made, though allowance must be made for the fact that it dates from 1952 and hence is no longer exhaustive. Of the inscriptions on ossuaries in Jerusalem mentioned by Frey, 97 are in Hebrew or Aramaic, 64 in Greek and 14 are bilingual, and a few are so illegible that practically nothing can be concluded about the language.<sup>1</sup> Greek is thus also strongly represented in the graves in the centre of the Jewish country.

Now of course it is possible that the frequent occurrence of Greek specifically in Jerusalem was owing to the visit or residence of many diaspora Jews in that town. Indeed, an indication that the deceased, whose remains are preserved in an ossuary, came from the diaspora can perhaps be discerned in a few inscriptions. When, for example, an inscription runs: Μαρία Ἀλεξανδρου γυνή ἀπὸ Καπούης, it is understandable that Thomsen suggests as possible explanation: "The indication of the origin ἀπὸ Καπούης might support the supposition that also the bones of Jews who died in the diaspora were brought to Jerusalem in ossuaries".<sup>2</sup> In this case, therefore, the use of Greek would be more characteristic of the Jews in the diaspora than of those in Jerusalem. The same might be presumed of a funerary inscription on a marble plaque, which says that Rabbi Samuel, an archisynagogos, came from Phrygia, or of an ossuary inscription which mentions Nicanor of Alexandria and his family.<sup>3</sup> In a few instances the texts seem to suggest that in a given tomb were buried only the deceased from a certain region of the diaspora. For example it is possible that the ossuaries found in a tomb in the Kidron valley in 1941 contain the bones of diaspora Jews who came from Cyrenaica. Various clues suggest this. In the first place a bilingual inscription in this tomb contains the words "of Alexander" in Greek alongside of "אלכסנדרוס קרנית" in Hebrew. These words have sometimes been interpreted as Alexander the Cyrenian. If so, however, the ן at the end is very strange in the name of a man. It could be a spelling mistake made by the man who engraved the inscription. Another possibility is that it is the name of an aromatic plant and therefore a nickname of Alexander which

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II nos. 1210-1387, pp. 245-320; the bilingual numbers are 1256, 1264, 1293, 1331, 1337, 1338, 1341, 1343, 1344, 1350, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1378; a detailed bibliography on the ossuaries is given on p. 245 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> ZDPV 1921, pp. 116 et seq.; CIJ II no. 1284.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II no. 1414, 1256.

referred to his profession. It is not quite certain that it is a reproduction of κυρηναῖος. Hence one wonders why there is no such qualification added to the Greek name of Alexander.<sup>1</sup> If, however, this qualification really does mean that the deceased came from Cyrene, then the qualification ΠΤΥΛΕΜΑΙΚΗ found in another grave, that of Sara daughter of Simon, could mean that this woman came from Ptolemais, which was also a town in Cyrenaica.<sup>2</sup> In the second place, the majority of the Greek names which occur on the ossuaries in this tomb were never before found in Greek-Jewish inscriptions in Palestine, whereas they are quite common in Cyrenaica. In the third place, a certain sign placed on one of these ossuaries to indicate the age of the deceased was quite commonly used on Jewish tombstones in Egypt and Cyrenaica. All these clues could indicate that the deceased buried in this tomb came from Cyrenaica. This entire family could, in that event, have belonged to the congregation of Cyrenians who are said, in Acts 6:9, to have had a synagogue in Jerusalem. One can go even further in this correlation with the New Testament, and, from the striking coincidence of both the names of Alexander and Simon in the funerary inscriptions in this tomb one could suggest as possible explanation that this tomb belonged to Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mk. 15:21).<sup>3</sup>

In my opinion, however, all these hypotheses are rather unsound. In particular the inscription which is said to prove that one of the deceased came from Cyrene is open to various interpretations, and consequently it is also uncertain whether the "Ptulemaïke" in another one refers to Ptolemais in Cyrene. Several places were called Ptolemais, and some scholars believe an other town than that in Cyrenaica is referred to here.

Hence there are only a very few really certain indications to be found in the Jerusalem ossuaries that the deceased preserved in them came from the diaspora. And there are definitely no grounds for ascribing the very numerous Greek inscriptions on these ossuaries to the fact that the deceased and their families came from the diaspora. If so, reference to this fact would have been made much

<sup>1</sup> IEJ 1962, pp. 10 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1962, pp. 8 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 12; Milik, quoted here by Avigad, also considers this nothing more than a possibility; cf. E. Dinkler, *op. cit.*, pp. 157 et seq.

more frequently in all sorts of qualifications added to the names of the dead. Hence it is highly probable that the great majority of these Greek inscriptions pertain to Jews who lived in Jerusalem itself or its immediate vicinity, and that the Greek therefore testifies to the knowledge of that language possessed by very many of them. Considering the large number of Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions, this means that many Jews in that town were bilingual and that some of them even preferred and were better acquainted with Greek. It is possible, for example, that the clumsy way in which the Semitic characters are formed in a bilingual inscription justifies Milik's statement: "One gets the impression that the scribe who engraved this knew Greek better than Hebrew".<sup>1</sup> It is very remarkable, indeed, that three Hebrew names are transcribed in Greek on the ossuaries found in the Kidron valley in 1941.<sup>2</sup> It is striking that in another above-mentioned bilingual inscription in Greek a qualification is added to indicate what the bearer of the name did in particular, whereas in Hebrew only the name is mentioned. In Greek is written Ὁστᾶ τῶν τοῦ Νεικάνορος Ἀλεξανδρέως ποιήσαντος τὰς θύρας, in Hebrew נִקְנֹר אֶלְכָסָא. It is questionable what "the making of the doors" means. Does it mean that Nicanor made the doors of the tomb or of the temple? There was a gateway of Nicanor in the temple, and the Talmud relates something of the vicissitudes of a Nicanor who went to fetch this gateway from Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> In both cases it is remarkable that the particular deed performed by Nicanor which was considered worthy of commemoration was mentioned in Greek only. It could indicate that the persons who commissioned this inscription were not only most familiar with it themselves, but also believed that many in Jerusalem could best read of this special achievement in Nicanor's life if it were written in Greek. In evaluating this inscription, however, it must be remembered that it refers to someone from Alexandria, and hence the use of Greek could provide more information about the customs of the Jews in the diaspora than of those in Jerusalem. The same must perhaps be said of the abovementioned inscription which is written almost entirely in Greek, with only the Hebrew words [שְׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכַּבְךָ] (peace be on your resting place) at the end. For

<sup>1</sup> Milik (see p. 144, note 1), p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> N. Avigad, IEJ 1962, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> CIJ II, no. 1256, pp. 261 et seq.; cf. E. Dinkler, *op. cit.*, p. 49, A no. 1.



this inscription commemorates a Rabbi Samuel, an archisynagogos who came from Phrygia.<sup>1</sup>

Hence it is not always quite clear what conclusions must be drawn from the texts on the ossuaries in Jerusalem. For the time being various data are liable to different interpretations, but they are sufficiently numerous and unambiguous to prove that also in Jerusalem in the first century A.D. the knowledge of Greek was widespread. Here the Hebrew inscriptions are relatively more numerous than in Beth Shearim, but the number of Greek funerary inscriptions is nevertheless remarkably large. Indeed it is so large that these ossuaries, found in a town where a greater use of Hebrew or Aramaic might normally be expected, can justifiably be said to constitute a proof equal to that found in the graves in Beth Shearim. And Benoit is right when he says somewhere: "The numerous Jewish inscriptions in Greek which are found again and again on the ossuaries or in the catacombs of Beth Shearim testify that this language was definitely not unknown to the public at large".<sup>2</sup>

Of great, perhaps the greatest importance for our present subject are the discoveries made in the caves around the Dead Sea. Ever since 1946, the year when the first of these discoveries was made, a continuous stream of new data has become available, some of which have only confirmed what had already been established, others however have cast a new light on the language problem of Palestine in those days.

These records are important because they are old and can sometimes be dated very accurately. True, few of them definitely concern the first century, but several are chronologically very approximate, for example all those writings dating from the period of Bar-Cochba or immediately prior to it—the first half of the second century. May one conclude that the linguistic relationships reflected in these writings can safely be dated back to the first century? Certain scholars believe so, others are hesitant about this. What almost certainly can be deduced from the finds in the caves of Murabba'at is that this region was trilingual, at least in the time of Bar-Cochba. Letters were found there in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. This need not imply that these three languages were equally current and

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, no. 1414, pp. 338 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> P. Benoit, O.P., J.T. Milik and R. de Vaux, O.P., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert II, Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, 1961, p. 210 (henceforth quoted as *Discoveries II*).

certainly not that such was the case throughout Palestine at that time. Different theories have been put forward to explain the remarkable phenomenon of the simultaneous use of Aramaic and Hebrew in Bar-Cochba's surroundings. According to Kutscher, the Aramaic of these letters is a spoken Aramaic dialect and the Hebrew the language that was spoken in Judea. In any case he believes it likely on the grounds of the data contained in these letters that Hebrew was still used as a spoken language in the period of the second temple, though spoken only in Judea, whereas Aramaic was the language normally spoken in Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Milik believes that the discoveries in Murabba'at prove beyond doubt that the Hebrew of the Mishnah was a language spoken by the people of Judea in the Persian and Graeco-Roman periods—a supposition entertained by many long before these data were discovered—and also believes it likely that Bar-Cochba endeavoured to enforce the use of the dialect spoken by him and his adherents as the sole official and literary medium of expression.<sup>2</sup> Howsoever this may be, it is certain that for one reason or another both Hebrew and Aramaic were written and very probably also spoken in the time of Bar-Cochba. Now if writings in Greek also occur, might it be said that Palestine was trilingual not only in the time of Bar-Cochba, but also before then? Does this not merely prove "the trilinguism of Palestine in the second century of our calendar"<sup>3</sup> but may we subsequently infer that this trilingualism existed before then, and certainly in the first century in Judea?<sup>4</sup>

Certain scholars doubt whether the language situation reflected in the writings of Murabba'at may automatically be assumed to have

<sup>1</sup> A summary of an article by Y. Kutscher (Leshonenu, 1961, pp. 117-133; 1962, pp. 8-22) in IEJ 1962, pp. 72 et seq.; cf. H. Ott, *Um die Muttersprache Jesu*, Novum Testamentum, Vol. IX, 1967, pp. 15 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, p. 70; cf. H. Ott, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> M. Delcor in a review of Discoveries II in *Vetus Testamentum*, 1962, o. 223: "le trilinguisme de la Palestine au III<sup>ème</sup> siècle de notre ère".

<sup>4</sup> J. T. Milik in Discoveries II, p. 69: "La triglossie en Judée, déjà très prononcée à l'époque hérodiennne, se maintient jusqu'à la Guerre de Ben Koshba"; cf. R. H. Gundry, *The Language Milieu of First-Century Palestine*, J.B.L. 1964, pp. 404-408; p. 405; "... proof now exists that *all three languages* in question—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek—were commonly used by Jews in first century Palestine. We are not dealing with an either/or, but with both/and. A difficulty has been that scholars were forced to infer their views from scattered literary intimations. But now we have archeological data at hand to settle the question. In this respect, NT scholarship must not lag behind archeological discovery..."

prevailed in Qumran as well, even though they are geographically and chronologically not far distant from each other. If the devastation of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. "signified a milestone also as regards language" and "the hellenization of the language made remarkable progress particularly from this date onwards", it is possible that the frequent use of Greek in writings of the second century may not automatically be assumed for the period prior to 70 A.D. Not everyone assumes that in the community of Qumran Hebrew and Aramaic were used simultaneously as spoken languages just as they were in the environment of Bar-Cochba. For example, Segert's description of the language situation is as follows: "At the time when the Qumran community was in existence, two Semitic languages were used by the Jews in Palestine, Aramaic as the language of everyday life and as language for communicating with other Eastern peoples, and Hebrew as the language of religion and of law. There exist no unambiguous proofs of the use of Hebrew in the daily life of this period".<sup>1</sup>

Hence with regard to Greek it is also possible that considerable shifts occurred in the very troubled times of the first and second centuries. The use of this language in particular could have been influenced in those days by exceptional sensitivities. One can easily imagine how Greek, which in a certain sense was an alien penetration, would have been suppressed by the strong nationalistic feelings which naturally flamed high in times of war against the Romans. Whether this really did happen will be investigated in greater detail in the course of the treatment of the letters dating from the time of Bar-Cochba. Influence could also have been exercised by the enforced Romanisation—which in a certain sense usually also meant Hellenisation—following on the devastation of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the rising of Bar-Cochba.

As indicated above, it therefore appears from the discoveries made in the caves of Qumran that Hebrew and Aramaic were used

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<sup>1</sup> Stanislav Segert, *Die Sprachenfrage in der Qumrān-gemeinschaft*, in 'Qumran-Probleme', *Vorträge des Leipziger Symposions über Qumran-Probleme*, vom 9. bis 14. Oktober 1961, herausgegeben von Hans Bardtke, 1963, pp. 315-339; the quotation on p. 316; Hyatt, for example, believes to the contrary that the fact that the Qumran texts are written mainly in Hebrew must lead to the conclusion that both Aramaic and Hebrew were spoken in the first century B.C. and A.D., J.Ph. Hyatt, *The Dead Sea Discoveries: retrospect and challenge*, JBL 1957, pp. 1-12; cf. in particular p. 10.

alongside of each other there, though perhaps in more or less clearly demarcated and separate fields. However writings in Greek have also been found, though few in number. In the fourth cave were found fragments of the Septuagint translation which contain sections of the books of Leviticus and Numbers.<sup>1</sup> In the seventh cave were found two manuscripts, one of which contained parts of Exodus and the other the Greek apocryphon, the Epistle of Jeremiah.<sup>2</sup> Consequently it is probable that one or more Greek copies of the Law and of other writings were kept in the community of Qumran. That was apparently expedient or necessary for certain reasons. What exactly these reasons were cannot readily be ascertained. It has been suggested that the Qumran congregation contained Hellenistic Jews who were acquainted with Greek. It was necessary to provide them with all sorts of edifying literature in their own language, but for their own personal edification only. The assumption is then that Hebrew was the official administrative language of the congregation. That was the language in which all religious acts took place in the congregation as a whole, all judicial proceedings and official education. In addition, however, it was permissible to read Aramaic as well as Hebrew devotional texts and, moreover, Greek ones if they were for 'private use'.<sup>3</sup>

This is an unproven hypothesis. Of course it is possible that there were Hellenistic Jews among the members of this congregation. Qumran was not situated so very far away from the Hellenistic towns of the Decapolis. Besides, it appears from the writings of Josephus, Philo and Pliny that the congregations of the Essenes were very well known and that for many they constituted a particularly strong attraction. Hence it need not be adjudged absolutely impossible that new members came to them from near and far, including Hellenistic Jews. Is it probable, however, that it was necessary to provide them with Greek copies of 'edifying' works because they could not comprehend Hebrew? In that event they would have comprehended nothing at all of what was 'officially' carried out and said in the congregation. That would surely have greatly cooled their desire to join such a congregation.

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<sup>1</sup> J. T. Milik, *Dix ans de découvertes dans le désert de Juda*, 1957, pp. 28, 29; R.B. 1956, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> R.B. 1956, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Segert, *op. cit.*, pp. 317, 322.

Is it not possible that the finding of fragments of Greek manuscripts here again indicates a much broader polylinguality in the entire congregation and that these Greek writings were not merely needed for a few Hellenistic Jews who could not do without Greek for their individual reading of the Law, but were sometimes used in the congregation as a whole, many Palestine members of which were familiar with Greek? Segert believes that Greek was not used as much in Qumran as in the writings which were found in Murabba'at and which are of a later period. In this connexion he points out that in the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of Qumran published thus far no words have been encountered which can definitely be classified as loan-words from Greek. But in those of Murabba'at occur Greek loan-words for 'law' **נִמְש** (*νόμος*) and 'marriage', **זִיג** (*ζυγόν*).<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the second century, the Jews in Palestine used Greek not only in the official deeds pertaining to taxes and fixed levies,<sup>2</sup> but also for proceedings connected with Jewish family law, such as marriage and divorces.<sup>3</sup> From this Segert infers that great progress was made in the use of Greek among the Jews between Qumran and Murabba'at. In comparing these texts, however, I believe that the difference in the character of the writings discovered should be borne in mind. On the whole those of Murabba'at are much more concerned with daily life than those of Qumran. And obviously in their language as well such official records as tax regulations, marriage contracts and suchlike would be more closely connected with the ordinary spoken and written language than manuscripts pertaining to the religious life of the individual and to social matters in a particular congregation. That is why the lack of Greek loan-words in the writings of Qumran does not constitute proof that they did not exist at that time and that Greek was then used less frequently among the Jews of Palestine. The presence of Greek writings in this typically Jewish congregation could mean more than that a few Hellenistic Jews needed them for their personal edification. It could also mean that many Palestine Jews—and they must have formed the large majority—could easily follow the reading of the Holy Books in Greek, even when this took place mainly for the

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<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II no. 21, lines 11 and 12 on p. 115, quoted by Segert, *op. cit.*, p. 317

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 89-97.

<sup>3</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 115 and 116.

benefit of those members of the community for whom Greek was the language of everyday life.

In Qumran the Greek texts comprise a very small minority compared with the very large number of Hebrew and Aramaic ones. The volume of the latter is also very much greater than that of the former. This of course means little in itself, since one cannot tell how many have been lost. Since fragments of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers in the Septuagint version have been found, it may be assumed that there was at least one copy of the entire Law in Qumran. Nevertheless what has been found of Greek manuscripts amounts to little. There is a great difference on this point between the finds made at Qumran and those in the caves of Murabba'at. In the latter, too, the Greek texts form the minority as compared with the Hebrew and Aramaic, though a large minority which is rendered all the more impressive by the rich variety of its contents.<sup>1</sup> These texts include a rather large number of accounts, reckoned in money, grain or pulses, but also marriage contracts, extracts from official decrees, lists of names, an IOU (bond) and fragments of literary and philosophical texts.

These texts are of a later date than those of Qumran. Apart from an odd text from the Byzantine and Arabian periods, they probably date for the most part from the first half of the second century A.D. The exact date of one of the marriage contracts has been preserved: the seventh year of the reign of Hadrian, i.e. 124 A.D.<sup>2</sup> Judging by the style of writing, all the others also fit in very well with this period and therefore belong to the period preceeding the second Jewish war. Their preservation in these caves is probably a consequence of the course of events in this war and thereafter. It is known that after the Jewish rising under Bar-Cochba was suppressed, Roman garrisons were stationed at various places, including this part of Palestine. The most recent excavations at Masada have provided additional proof of that, also as regards this stronghold. And before the rising, too, large Roman military units were of course always to be found in Palestine. In particular it was the tenth legion, Legio X Fretensis, which had an important share in the suppression of the rising. The excavations have provided abundant proof of this long-known historical fact. The Roman soldiers

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<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, pp. 209-269; there the introduction to and commentary on them is given by P. Benoit, O.P.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, no. 115, p. 248.

mentioned here and there in the texts of Murabba'at probably belonged to this legion. In one of them, an IOU, one of the two parties is a Roman soldier of whom it is said that he was λεγεῶνος δ[εκάτης]. Hence he belonged to the tenth legion, and, as was customary, his century is specified immediately thereafter.<sup>1</sup> However, this papyrus probably must be ascribed to the second half of the second century A.D., perhaps in 171; and the extracts from official decrees which were found probably also belong to the second half of the second century, specifically to the end of it.<sup>2</sup> This could indicate that, for a long time after the rising under Bar-Cochba had been suppressed, a Roman force of occupation was retained, or such posts were regularly checked by Roman patrols. It should be remembered, however, that Roman occupationary forces were stationed at this spot in other periods as well. In a papyrus containing parts of a lawsuit instigated by two Jewish women called Mariamme and Salome, unfortunately handed down to us in a very damaged condition but probably dating from the first half of the second century A.D., a veteran οἰβητρανός is mentioned as opposing party.<sup>3</sup>

All this does nothing to simplify the evaluation of the Greek texts at Murabba'at. The first thing that must be known with some degree of certainty is the period from which the texts derive. But even if the period is almost definitely established, there is no certainty as to how far the Greek of these texts might be accounted evidence that the Jews of that time and that region spoke and wrote Greek. It should then be established with a degree of certainty to what extent bodies other than Jewish ones were involved in the drawing up of these documents. Even if Jewish names are mentioned and evidently Jewish persons are referred to, it is often questionable whether Jews composed and wrote this Greek and whether they fully understood it since it was the language they wrote and spoke.

In the first place it should be noted that several of these documents are of an official character and that therefore this use of Greek often indicates which language was used for official instruments at various levels by the governmental bodies of the day. This, however, provides no information about the language spoken and written by the Jews in those days and those regions. What can be said is that those bodies were evidently convinced that such

<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, no. 114, pp. 240, 242.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, no. 117, pp. 256 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Discoveries II, no. 113, p. 239.

documents in Greek could be understood by the parties in question, or at least by all sorts of people in the immediate vicinity of these parties. This applies more specifically to the documents pertaining exclusively to Jews.

Now a relatively large number of these Greek documents are more or less of an official nature and were at least drawn up by official bodies. Accounts in money and in kind, which are sometimes very carefully kept, sometimes recorded more hastily, were drawn up by civil servants. Sometimes they contain Greek terms and phrases which strongly resemble those in similar papyri found in Egypt, even when they differ slightly on certain points. Such deeds were probably drawn up and inscribed by officials of the Roman administration. It is not feasible that they issue from the authorities of Bar-Cochba. He must certainly have felt he had the right to impose taxes on the Palestinian farmers of that region, since as prince of Israel he ruled over the territory that was occupied by his army and was hence his property. Nevertheless it is not likely that he would have given expression to that right in official documents formulated in Greek. They would have been drawn up in Hebrew or Aramaic. Indeed there is no Greek whatsoever on the coins dating from the period of the revolt of Bar-Cochba.<sup>1</sup> Other Greek documents from Murabba'at sometimes reveal more or less clearly an official character. The manuscript containing the records of a lawsuit brought by two Jewish women against a Roman veteran appears to have been drawn up by a sort of notary.<sup>2</sup> The contract pertaining to the marriage that was concluded once more after a temporary separation has the outward form of what is known as a double document—the Mishnah calls it a 'tied up' deed—by which two copies were inscribed on one sheet of papyrus, the scriptura exterior and the scriptura interior. This custom of drawing up such documents in duplicate is well known from antiquity. And the placing of the signature in this contract was characteristic of the double documents from the Roman period.<sup>3</sup>

Thus it must be admitted that the Greek of several of these documents reveals more about the language used by the Roman governmental bodies in occupied territories than about the written and spoken language of the Jews living there. Moreover it is not

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Discoveries II, pp. 215, 123, 226.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> Discoveries II, pp. 244 et seq., 246 et seq.; cf. IEJ 1962, pp. 236 et seq.



known for sure who brought these writings to Murabba'at, nor why they were preserved. It is practically certain that they were seldom drawn up at that place. Did the Romans bring them to a camp located there before or after the revolt, in a period when the caves were also occupied by the Romans? Or were they brought there by Jewish rebels, who sought their final refuge in the caves during the revolt? The latter alternative would seem the more feasible to me. In the first place it has been established by material found in these and other caves that at various places the Jews withdrew to hiding places in the cliffs. And in the second place it is remarkable that the documents found in the caves of Murabba'at definitely contain a few which could only have been of any importance to Jews. Whereas it was conceivably in the veteran's interest to preserve the papyrus containing the records of the lawsuit between him and the two Jewish women,<sup>1</sup> the document relating to the renewal of a temporarily suspended marriage could have been of importance only to the Jews who hereby renewed their marriage.<sup>2</sup> For this Elaïos or Eleaios, son of Simon, and Salome, daughter of John Galgoula, were undoubtedly Jews. Both forms of the name of the man used by the writer of this contract can readily be explained as a reproduction of אֵלְעִיֹר. The reproduction of the 'ajin depends on whether Ἐλεάζαρος or Ἐλάζαρος (Λάζαρος) is written, similarly Ἐλεαῖος or Ἐλαῖος.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt whatsoever that Salome is a Jewish woman. It is also highly probable that she was a relative of Yeshua' ben Galgoula, who is mentioned in the well-known letters addressed to him in Aramaic, two by Bar-Cochba himself.<sup>4</sup>

Hence it is very likely that Jews brought the majority of these documents to the caves. If not all, at least the greater part of them were drawn up in Greek before the revolt broke out, in peacetime and probably in places not too far distant from Murabba'at.

The reason why they were brought here is not known for certain. Benoit presumes that some of the documents were taken there by either the rebels or the Romans so that they could be used again after the writing had been removed.<sup>5</sup> Benoit's assumption could indeed be feasible, if it concerned the accounts in money and in

<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, no. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, no. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Discoveries II, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> Discoveries II, no. 42-44 cf. also pp. 251 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Discoveries II, p. 215.

kind. If, however, it is established that several of these documents were brought here by Jewish rebels, that some were written there or in the immediate vicinity—as for example the Aramaic letters of Bar-Cochba, that others could be deemed important for the families of Jews who took refuge here—such as the marriage contract, then it is likely that all these documents which date from the first half of the second century and which were brought here were considered important for one reason or another by the Jewish rebels and their families. It is not likely that in such times the Jewish rebels bothered about material for writing on, unless it were for missives issued by the leaders of the revolt. If some of the documents were preserved for this purpose, then of course the use of Greek would have no validity as proof about the knowledge of this language possessed by the Jews who brought them there. If, however, the contents of these documents were in any way of importance to them—and to me this seems practically certain as regards the large majority of them—then these Jewish refugees must have known what they contained. They could have learned this from others who knew Greek, but it is not unlikely that many of them could read the language for themselves. Hence it is quite possible that many Jewish farmers named in the accounts in money and in kind could themselves read these Greek documents so well that they knew what they had to pay or receive.<sup>1</sup> And it is not likely that the Jewish married couple who renewed their broken marriage understood nothing of the lengthy Greek documents which gave a detailed description of the terms of their re-marriage.<sup>2</sup> Greek was not their normal daily language. That was probably Aramaic, the language in which were written the letters to Yeshua' ben Galgoula, who perhaps belonged to the same family as the remarried woman Salome. Nor did he draw up the document personally. That was done by governmental officials who knew the terminology which was customary in the Roman provinces at that time and who therefore knew exactly what had to be written. But if the governmental machinery in Palestine and the instruments issued by it had thus been hellenised, then it was certainly in the interest of the Jews who had to work with such documents and for whom, as in this instance, they were of vital importance, that they could read

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<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 89-107, 118-125.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, no. 115.

and understand them for themselves. The fact that they took them along to their last hiding place makes this all the more plausible.

It is then also possible that the philosophical and literary texts in Greek which were found here were brought along by the Jewish refugees. The state of preservation of these texts is so poor and the fragments are so minute and illegible that it is impossible to determine to which writings they belonged. If this were known, then it would probably be possible to deduce with greater certainty who was responsible for their removal to this place. Meanwhile of course allowance must be made for the possibility that they belonged to the intellectual impedimenta of Roman soldiers.<sup>1</sup> The same obtains for those fragments in Greek found in large numbers in Murabba'at but in such minute particles that nothing can be inferred about their contents—fragments of which Benoit nevertheless says that "they are yet eloquent, if only because of their great number; this mass of varied texts all of which cannot derive from the Roman occupiers, can only be explained in a milieu in which Greek was a relatively normal language".<sup>2</sup> This is not, I believe, entirely convincing. It is not known, for example, from how many writings these fragments come. Possible they derive from only a few. It is not known how large the Roman occupying force was in Murabba'at and the surrounding area. If the garrison was replaced at times and if patrols regularly inspected this area, then over a longer period a considerable number of Roman soldiers could have been stationed there. Hence it does not appear quite certain to me that these numerous fragments in Greek form a supplementary indication of the familiarity with this language of the Jews in the region of Murabba'at. And also regarding all the documents in Greek found at Murabba'at the inescapable conclusion is that in themselves they do not constitute definite proof that the Jews and their families who took refuge here were very well acquainted with Greek. On the grounds of the discoveries in the caves of Murabba'at it could even be postulated to the contrary that the personal correspondence between Jews that was found here is in Aramaic and that not one personal letter in Greek has been brought to light.<sup>3</sup> Therefore it is extremely important that discoveries have been made in caves on

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<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 108-112.

<sup>2</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 126-155; Benoit p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Discoveries II, nos. 42-48.

Israeli soil which, in my view, are even more explicit and consequently render a certain interpretation of the material of Murabba'at the more plausible.

On Israeli soil, too, have been found documents in Greek which bear a more or less official character, and on certain points some of these throw a clearer light on our problem than discoveries made on Jordanian soil. This applies, for example, to one of the most important discoveries in the "Cave of the Letters" in Nahal Hever, the so-called Babatha archives. These are entirely composed of more or less official records, but the family history which can be traced in them endows them with particular importance. Moreover the chronology of these documents can be established exactly, sometimes even to the very date. Babatha was the daughter of Simeon bar Menahem. The latter had taken up residence in Maḥoza in the region of Zoar to the south-east of the Dead Sea, an area which at that time belonged to the Kingdom of the Nabataeans. This took place at the end of the first century A.D. He had acquired large tracts of land, including date palm groves. The title deeds pertaining to these conveyances of property were understandably drawn up in Nabataean. This Simeon married Miriam, daughter of Joseph, and of this marriage was born Babatha, the principal mentioned again and again in these documents. At the beginning of the second century Babatha married the Jew Yeshua ben Joseph. Their son was called Yeshua. Shortly afterwards Babatha lost her husband, for soon repeated mention is made of the orphan Yeshua. Years later, probably in 124 A.D., Babatha once more married a Jew, this time called Judah bar Eleazar, belonging to the family of Khtusion, a wealthy family of Engedi. This Judah had a second wife at Engedi called Miriam. By her Judah had a daughter Shlamzion, who married a Jew living in Engedi in 128. Not later than 130 Babatha once more became a widow. It goes without saying that these complicated family relationships gave rise to all sorts of grounds for conflict. Abundant testimonial of such is provided by the documents found. Babatha was faced with great problems especially regarding the guardianship of the son of her first marriage and the struggle for the property she inherited from her mother Miriam, who was appointed sole heir by her father, and from her first and second husbands.

Obviously the documents pertaining to these difficulties are of an official character and are very similar in form, regardless of the

language in which they are drawn up. They, too, have the form of double documents.<sup>1</sup>

The Nabataean documents were drawn up in the governmental offices in Petra or in the vicinity of that town and were written in Nabataean, in the Aramaic spoken by the Nabataeans of that time. The exact date is indicated by the year of the king's reign, for example: on the eighth of Elul, in the 23rd year of Rabel the King, king of the Nabataeans, i.e. 10 September 93 A.D.<sup>2</sup> In this way many of these documents can be dated precisely, calculating from the regnal year of Trajan or Hadrian, from the years of the consuls and the Roman months and days. In 106 A.D. the Nabataean kingdom ceased to be independent and became part of the province of Arabia, and so the names of Roman governors are mentioned in the records as from that date. Accordingly it is said that the date is calculated *κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῆς νέας ἐπαρχίας Ἀραβίας*.

Obviously these documents disclose more straightforward information about conditions and relationships in Nabataean territory than about the Jewish land proper, even when they are composed in Greek. The only document written in Greek and not drawn up on Nabataean territory concerns a loan and was drawn up in Engedi. The reason why only this document found its way into the Babatha archives is clearly motivated in the contents, where we read that Judah, son of Eleazar Khtusion borrows 60 Tyrian silver denarii, equal to 15 staters, from Magonius Valens, centurion of a Thracian cohort (*σπείρης πρώτης μελιαρίας Θρακῶν*). He promises to pay back the loan in 8 months time plus an interest of 1 percent per month. He offers the house of his father Eleazar as surety, and its location is described in detail. It appears to have stood beside the road, almost opposite the Roman military post.<sup>3</sup>

From this document of 6 May 124 A.D. it can clearly be deduced that a friendly relationship existed at that time between at least certain of the Jewish inhabitants and the Roman occupying force. The Jew Judah mentioned here is, of course, the man who married Babatha shortly thereafter. He must therefore have lived in Engedi,

<sup>1</sup> JEOL No. 17 (1963), p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 259; cf. The Illustrated London News, Nov. 11, 1961, pp. 821 et seq. (in an article by Yiguel Yadin: New Archives of the Revolt of Bar Kochba; a rich hoard of documents from the Dead Sea Cave of Nahal Hever).

where he was in contact with a Roman officer. One can easily imagine how he discussed his financial problems with the Roman officer, his neighbour on the other side of the road, and how the latter offered to help him out with a loan. The conversation was probably held in Greek. This Jew of Engedi, like others, must have experienced how expedient and sometimes how necessary it was to be able to speak with non-Jews in this language. Although the official loan contract provides no absolute proof of the relevant parties' knowledge of Greek, in this instance it is highly probable that this was the language used in the preliminary talks. Since both parties to the loan contract are clearly stated, this is more certainly an instance of contact between a Jew and a Roman soldier than that of the IOU found in Murabba'at, in which a Roman soldier was also concerned. The latter document has been compared with that from Nahal Hever.<sup>1</sup>

In this respect, the official documents drawn up on Nabataean territory do not provide equally convincing proof. Some are written in Nabataean and in Aramaic, though their number is remarkably slight in comparison with those written in Greek. There are 6 documents in Nabataean and 3 in Aramaic as compared with 26 in Greek. Moreover the Nabataean deeds date from before 106, the year when Nabataea ceased to be an independent kingdom and became part of the Roman province Arabia. Hence all of them derive from the time of Rabel II, the last independent ruler of Nabataea (70-106 A.D.). The very fact that after 106 the language of the documents is practically always Greek proves that the language of the documents cannot simply be identified with the language spoken in that region either before or after that date. The fact that the document which deals with the appointment of guardians for the son of Babatha and is an official copy, ἀπὸ ἄκτων βουλῆς πετραίων τῆς μητροπόλεως, is written in Greek in no way implies that the difficult negotiations which undoubtedly led up to it were also conducted in the same language.<sup>2</sup> In another document similarly in Greek which dates from 12 October 125, mention is made of legal proceedings brought by Babatha against one of the guardians before the Roman legate. The document runs: "therefore I summon you to appear for judgment before the bench of governor Julius

<sup>1</sup> Discoveries II, no. 114; IEJ 1962, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 234; IEJ 1962, p. 260.

Julianus at Petra, metropolis of Arabia".<sup>1</sup> A lawsuit such as this was probably conducted in Greek. Was it therefore Greek that was spoken by the two parties, or were interpreters used? The remarkable thing about this document is that a few lines have been appended in Aramaic, in the handwriting of Juda Khtusion, the second husband of Babatha. Does this mean that he was best acquainted with Aramaic, even though he was able to make himself understood to the Roman officer in Engedi? But what was the language spoken by Babatha and the Jewish guardian, who, unlike the other guardian who was a Nabataean, had not paid the sum owing? It would have simplified the proceedings if they spoke Greek, and possibly they did.

There is a document containing a statement about landed property owned by Babatha which was made in connexion with a land census held in that year, 124, by the Roman governor of the province. Babatha appears before the census official accompanied by her second husband Judah, son of Eleazar, who resided in Maḥoza at the time of the census but whose birth place, the village Engedi in the toparchy of Jericho, is also mentioned. He appears here as the κύριος, the guardian of Babatha.<sup>2</sup> Did they explain the state of affairs to the census official in Greek, or was an interpreter present at such meetings? One is inclined to presume the former, since Babatha is said, as a matter of course, to have sworn an oath on her statement on the τύχη of the emperor: ὁμνυμι τύχην κυρίου Καίσαρος καλῇ πίστει ἀπογεγράφθαι.

After the death of Judah, Babatha had to conduct various legal proceedings against members of his family who requested her to cede to them a share of the property she inherited from her second husband. Here the opposing parties were "the orphans of Jesus, son of Eleazar Khtusion", no doubt a member of Judah's family, and perhaps even more so the other wife of Judah Μαρίαμη Βεϊανοῦ, who accused her of unlawful actions regarding the property of their deceased husband. It is not surprising that Babatha made the same accusations about Mariame. Here this trail leads back to Engedi, just like the statement about the guardian of the orphans, who takes legal action on their behalf, Βησᾶς Ἰησοῦου Ἡγαδηνός. He is connected with a Roman woman, Julia Crispina, who is mentioned as ἐπισκοπος, but it is not quite clear what this term implies nor what

<sup>1</sup> JEOL No. 17, pp. 237 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, pp. 238 et seq.; IEJ 1962, p. 260.

the nature was of her connexion with Besas. In any case they act in concert when, according to a document of 19 June 130, they cede to Judah's daughter a *αὐλή* at Engedi "from the landed property of your grandfather Eleazaros". Julia Crispina appends her signature with a Greek statement: *Ιουλῖα Κρισπεῖνα ἐπίσκοπος ὁμολογῶ συγκεχωρηκένε ἀκολο[ύθ]ως*. In the summer of 131 she appears instead of Besas, who is ill. She then becomes entangled in a legal dispute with Babatha, which results in both women summoning each other to appear in legal proceedings before the Roman governor.<sup>1</sup>

It can be seen from these data—and this is why they are important in the present context—that these legal proceedings were not confined within certain territorial bounds. People from Engedi were involved in legal proceedings conducted partly on Nabataean territory in the years immediately prior to the revolt of Bar-Cochba. Both Mariame and Besas belonged to Engedi. The former, Mirjam daughter of Beájan, was probably the sister of the man who, as is known from other sources, was several years later in charge of Bar-Cochba's bureaucratic administration in the toparchy of Engedi.<sup>2</sup> The latter was connected shortly before the revolt with a Roman woman who had a command of Greek, judging from her appended statement. What manifestly emerges from all these data is that in a place like Engedi people of divergent groups intermingled as a matter of course, that all sorts of connexions existed between the region of Engedi and the Nabataean land and, moreover, that the Jews who had gone to live in the Nabataean land were completely at home there and intermingled with the Nabataean inhabitants. The exact delineation of the boundaries of orchards in these documents clearly demonstrates that they lived in the midst of the others and that their landed property was fully recognised before the law. Very likely this changed radically shortly afterwards on the outbreak of the revolt. Data from the time of Bar-Cochba, which pertain mainly to the region of Engedi and no longer to parts of the province of Arabia, testify to this.<sup>3</sup> But up to that time all sorts of groups lived side by side and evidently were in daily communication with each other. It is only to be expected that legal documents contain information about hostility in these relationships. An

<sup>1</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 240; IEJ 1962, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> JEOL No. 17, pp. 233, 240.



intensive and peaceful intercourse with each other cannot be demonstrated though it can plausibly be assumed. If, therefore, there was regular contact between groups of the population which spoke different languages because of different nationality or descent, they obviously tried to make themselves understood in Greek, the language current throughout the entire Roman empire.

Of course the one Jew knew this language better than the other. Appended to some of the documents from the archives of Babatha which are written in Greek are a few lines in another language, usually giving a short summary of the contents. An example has already been given above: the fact that Judah Khtusion appended something in Aramaic to a document probably indicates that he was best acquainted with this language.<sup>1</sup> One of the two guardians appointed over the son of Babatha born of her first marriage signed in a like manner—a Nabataean who signed in the Nabataean language.<sup>2</sup> Appended to a document regulating the sale of a consignment of dates which was drawn up in Greek is a confirmation of the contents made by a Jew, Jochanan, who acted as a guardian for Babatha in this transaction. This confirmation is similarly written in Nabataean.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the document in which Babatha confirms that she received certain sums of money from her son's guardian, a document written in Greek, a summary of the contents is given by Babatha's guardian in this matter, a Jew specified by name, but this time the language is Aramaic.<sup>4</sup> Apparently it was considered necessary that all parties concerned with the contents of a document understood exactly what it was about and testified to such by appending their signature to a recapitulation of the main points in a language understood by them.

Evidence that some Jews had a very good command of Greek can be found in the names mentioned of Jewish clerks, who drew up several of these documents in Greek. Apparently there were experienced Jewish clerks in these regions who were employed in Jewish registration offices. They knew Aramaic, but also Greek, according to several documents written in that language. Such a Jewish *λεβάριος* mentions himself as *ὁ δὲ γράψας τοῦτο Θεωνᾶς Σιμωνος*, for example, in the text of a contract. He was certainly

<sup>1</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 241.

a Jew, as was Germanus, son of Judah, who is mentioned several times in the documents, for example after the introductory words ἐγράφη διὰ. . .<sup>1</sup> The last document from the archives of Babatha, which is dated 19 August 132, was also written by Germanus, son of Judah, clerk of Maḥoza. In this instance Babatha's guardian, a Jew called Babely son of Menahem, confirms the brief summary of the contents of the document in Aramaic. Hereafter, however, there follows a literal translation in Greek of the Aramaic summary and confirmation written in the handwriting of the Jewish clerk Germanus and beginning with the word: 'translation'.<sup>2</sup> This is clear evidence that the civil servants who wrote and probably themselves drew up official instruments in Greek also numbered Jews, who therefore had a perfect command of Greek.

There are even indications that official documents in Greek were also at times issued by Jewish bureaus. In the region of Naḥal Seelim were found 8 fragments of papyri, badly damaged unfortunately, some of which contain several lines, but others nothing more than a few letters. They are remains of official documents, as can be inferred from both contents and style of writing. They were evidently penned by a skilled clerk in clear, graceful and flowing letters. The writing is on one side of the papyri, and there is nothing to indicate the latter were used for a second time. Apparently the persons who preserved these documents considered them so valuable that they never even thought of using them to write on for other purposes.<sup>3</sup> The papyri contain lists of persons, the great majority of whom have Jewish names. Numbers designated in Greek letters are placed before their names. Unfortunately the exact relevance of these figures is obscure. The word ΕΙΩΓΓ, a few times in full and sometimes in part, precedes the number in front of the name. The obvious assumption is that it indicates a certain measure, perhaps of land or of some dry or liquid product. In any case these are official documents which deal with the possessions or duties of Jewish inhabitants of that region. Hence they could have been drawn up in the offices of the Roman administration. However, the addition of the word ἀδελφός to a name,

<sup>1</sup> JEOL No. 17, pp. 233, 240, 241.

<sup>2</sup> JEOL No. 17, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1961, p. 53; therefore this also detracts from the plausibility of the aforesaid hypothesis of Benoit (see p. 157, note 5), since the reference here is to documents of the same type.

which occurs a few times in full and a couple of times in part, detracts from the feasibility of this conjecture. This same word occurs in a few letters originating in the time and the vicinity of Bar-Cochba. One of them addressed by Simon bar Kosiba to the men of Engedi, to Masabala and Jonathan bar Ba'ajan, contains the bitter reproach: "You sit down and eat and drink from the property of the house of Israel and have no regard whatsoever for your brothers". This letter was written in Hebrew and thus uses the word **אָח**. But another of this same bundle of letters which is written in Greek speaks of "brother" and "brothers". The opening line containing the greeting runs: 'Ανάγνος 'Ιωνάθην τῷ ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν. Bar-Cochba is probably mentioned in the following line: Σίμων Χωσιβᾶ. What the letter says is that Hanan delivers to Jonathan Bar-Cochba's orders about sending supplies to meet the needs of "our brothers" (τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν). The letter ends with the salutation ἔρροσο ἀδελφε.<sup>1</sup> Yadin calls this "the customary greeting used by members of a sect or group of warriors and the like". And Lifshitz, who discusses the meaning of the word ἀδελφός in connexion with the aforesaid list of names, concludes that the use of this word indicates that the documents belonged to an organisation resembling the Essene sect. In his opinion it is possible that "brother" was a special title bestowed on persons who held a certain position of authority in the organisation, a position reached after going through a trial period, as with the Essenes. An echo of this is said to be discernible in the trials to which Bar-Cochba subjected his adherents. But Lifshitz very circumspectly adds: "All this must of course remain mere conjecture, since the condition of the papyrus fragments does not permit of any certainty in establishing facts".<sup>2</sup> Indeed all this remains conjecture. I believe it hardly likely that the term 'brother' refers to a special position of authority. In particular the word 'brother', which suggests equality, would probably not have been used for this purpose. Moreover the use of the word does not constitute certain proof that the adherents of Bar-Cochba were organised along the same lines as the Essene sect. In my view it is possible that a feeling of close unity in the common struggle against the enemy for the freedom of Jerusalem under the ruler of Israel was sufficient reason to address each other as 'brother'. The same significance could also be attached

<sup>1</sup> IEJ 1961, pp. 54, 55, 59, 47, 44; Aegyptus 1962, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1961, p. 61; cf. Aegyptus 1962, pp. 252 et seq.

to the greeting at the beginning of the letter in Greek, which is the only one found thus far in the excavations in Masada and refers to a supply of beverages and vegetables: Ἀβασκαντος Ἰούδα τῷ ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν.<sup>1</sup> Further evidence that the word 'brother' was used in much earlier times in the sense of a strong appreciation of mutual affiliation is to be seen in a document on an ostrakon, found in 1960 in the ruins of a fort 18 km. to the south of Jaffa which dates from the seventh century B.C., in which a mower complains to the proper authority that a garment was surreptitiously stolen by a man specified by name. Among other things he says that all his brothers are willing to testify in his favour, all who were bringing in the harvest with him in the heat.<sup>2</sup> In using the term כָּל אחִי, the complainant very probably referred to the labourers who were harvesting along with him, and I believe it certainly need not mean that he designated them thus because they all belonged to a community.<sup>3</sup> The team spirit which naturally develops among a group of workers who are hired together for a period provides sufficient explanation for the use of such a term.

No matter what significance is attached to the meaning of the word ἀδελφός in the Greek documents that have been excavated,<sup>4</sup> I believe it in no way likely that this word would have been used in official deeds of the Roman authorities, certainly not in connexion with the names of Jews. Hence the most feasible explanation is that these Greek documents containing lists of names derive for the major part from the period and the environment of Bar-Cochba. Since they manifestly are of the nature of official docu-

<sup>1</sup> IEJ 1965, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1964, p. 150, lines 10 and 11, in an article by J. D. Amusin and M. L. Heltzer, The Inscription from Meşad Hashavyahu, Complaint of a Reaper of the Seventh Century B.C., pp. 148-157.

<sup>3</sup> This is suggested as a possibility by the author of the said article, though circumspectly: "Purely hypothetically it might be suggested that the reaper was one of a commune. Indirectly this is indicated by the expression 'brethren'" IEJ 1964, p. 156; K. R. Veenhof correctly, I believe, translates: כָּל אחִי both times as "all my colleagues", Art. "Nieuwe Palestijnse inscripties" in Phoenix, XI, 2, 1965, p. 250; cf. Shemaryahu Talmon, The New Hebrew Letter from the Seventh Century B.C. in Historical Perspective, BASOR 1964 pp. 29-38.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also J. Schwartz, Remarques sur des fragments grecs du désert de Juda, R.B. 1962, pp. 61-63. This author disagrees with Lifshitz. According to him "une sense militaire" should not be ascribed to the word ἀδελφός, but Schwartz does not make clear which meaning he thinks it should have.

ments, they must have been drawn up in some Jewish bureau or other during the brief rule of Bar-Cochba over these regions. When finally the rebels and their families fled to these caves, they took along these official documents so precious to them, probably at first in the hope that one day after they were delivered of their enemy they would be able to use them again as testimonials. This then would constitute proof that, even in the circles of those who passionately fought the enemy to attain their freedom, Greek was sometimes used in official documents.

The letters of Bar-Cochba which have been found demonstrate that there are absolutely no grounds for deeming this improbable, for Greek even occurs in the letters sent personally by him to men who occupied important posts in the years of the rebellion. In the 'Cave of the Letters' were found 15 letters, 8 of which are definitely in Aramaic, 3 in Hebrew, 2 probably in Hebrew and 2 definitely in Greek. The remarkable thing is that the letters in all three languages deal with similar subjects and are often addressed to the same people. The phraseology at the beginning and the end of the letters is entirely concordant. One of the two letters in Greek is addressed to Jonathan and Masabala, the two men to whom the letters in Hebrew and in Aramaic are addressed. Therefore letters from Simon Bar-Cochba sent to the same Jewish leaders in the region of Engedi were written sometimes in Aramaic, sometimes in Hebrew and sometimes in Greek.<sup>1</sup> All three categories of letters have been preserved, probably by Jonathan and Masabala when they were forced to flee to these caves in the last days of the revolt. Since the letters sometimes concern confiscations and Simon Bar-Cochba was in the habit of adding threats to his orders and commands, it is quite feasible that these two men took along all these documents to the caves as a precautionary measure in view of the possible state of affairs after the revolt. If the revolt succeeded—and I believe that their hope of success is demonstrated by the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the letters are given in full, some in part in an article by Y. Yadin on the Expedition D, in *IEJ* 1961, pp. 36-52, the Bar-Cochba letters pp. 40 et seq., numbers 3 and 6 on pp. 42 et seq. and p. 44 are the ones in Greek; the two Greek letters are reproduced at length in an article by B. Lifshitz, *Papyrus grecs du désert de Juda, in Aegyptus, Rivista Italiana di Egittologia e di Papyrologia*, 1962, pp. 240-256; the reconstructed text of the letters on pp. 241 and 248; with a reproduction at the end of the article. Cf. also the article by Y. Yadin in *The Illustrated London News*, Nov. 4, 1961, pp. 773 et seq.

they took such papers with them to their hiding place—and the country was once more in Jewish hands but Bar-Cochba were killed in battle, then difficulties could arise concerning the actions of these two during the revolt. In the event that serious accusations were made against them, they could then produce Bar-Cochba's letters to exonerate their acts. With their use they could demonstrate how irritable the prince of Israel had been in the days of the revolt and how he had made serious threats in order to ensure that persons who showed any signs of disregarding his authority carried out his commands. These letters in three languages were then of equal importance to them.

How is it possible that, in a purely Jewish milieu during a ruthless war against the Romans, the man who called himself prince of Israel used alternatively three different languages, one being Greek, in communicating with Jewish leaders in a truly Jewish area? One explanation could be that Bar-Cochba had various clerks at his headquarters, each of whom was specially acquainted with one of the three languages and took down in it what was dictated by Bar-Cochba or one of his lieutenants. Not all letters have been preserved integrally, and here and there they are hardly legible. That is why it cannot be said with absolute certainty whether Bar-Cochba never signed his letters personally. This applies, for example, to one of the two letters in Greek. Lifshitz's opinion is that Bar-Cochba signed it personally, using Σουμαῖος as his Greek name.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence that clerks were indeed used in Bar-Cochba's headquarters is to be found in a letter in Aramaic which concludes with the words **שמעון בר יהודה כתבה**, Shim'on bar Yehuda has written this.<sup>2</sup> And another letter in Aramaic is signed: Shemuel bar 'Ami. The writing of the signature is not the same as that used in the letter itself, and so it has been conjectured that one of Bar-Cochba's staff dictated it.<sup>3</sup> But this letter written on wood clearly issued from Bar-Cochba personally, named here with his full title **הנסי על ישראל**. It is remarkable that three times there occurs in this letter a word in Aramaic which is derived from the Greek **ἀσφάλεια**, אספליא, meaning either pledge, guarantee or surveillance, custody. It has been the latter meaning in this letter,

<sup>1</sup> Aegyptus 1962, pp. 243 et seq.; cf. IEJ 1961, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1961, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1961, p. 42

in which orders are given to arrest a man specified by name and to send him in custody to Bar Kosiba.

And so we see that there definitely is some question of clerks in respect of these letters, perhaps also of men who dictated them in behalf of Bar-Cochba. Nevertheless I do not believe it likely that this is the only explanation for the use of the different languages. Even if it were, it would still be remarkable that there were Jewish scribes and secretaries at the headquarters of the leader of the Jewish revolt who could speak one or more of these three languages, including Greek. It is similarly remarkable that these letters in the three languages were sometimes addressed to the same Jewish leaders in Engedi. Jonathan and Masabala received very personal orders in all three languages. Hence it is highly probable that they understood such orders in all three languages, or at least knew of Jews in their neighborhood who could fully explain the orders in Greek to them. The fact that the letters in all three languages were addressed directly to them makes it almost certain, in my view, that they could read and understand them themselves.

Besides, Bar-Cochba himself does not seem to have had the slightest objection to having letters written in Greek sent out in his name to the leaders of his supporters. If it were his signature appended to one of the two letters in Greek,<sup>1</sup> then it would also be

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<sup>1</sup> This is not certain, in my opinion, notwithstanding the rather definite statements made by Lifshitz, ZDPV 1962, p. 78; Aegyptus 1962, p. 244. Lifshitz points out that the name Šema' sometimes occurs on the coins of Bar-Cochba as well as the name Šim'on and that Σουμαῖος could be the Greek transcription of this or a similar name. In the other Greek letter in which Bar-Cochba's name does not occur in the signature but in the letter itself, he is called Σίμων χωσιβᾶ, Aegyptus 1962, p. 248. On these grounds should the conclusion be: "Les deux lettres nous fournissent un témoignage précieux sur la pratique de la chancellerie de Bar-Kokheba; le nom grec Σίμων et le nom sémitique hellénisé Σουμαῖος étaient employés dans la correspondance grecque pour transcrire le nom du Chef?" (p. 249). Or should allowance not be made for the possibility that only the name Σίμων was used in Greek and that Σουμαῖος is the signature of someone other than the leader of the revolt? I am inclined to agree with Yadin's remark: "the matter requires further study", IEJ 1961, p. 50. Even if Bar-Cochba is not the author, he must have been someone close to him. Even in that case the statement is remarkable and confirms what appears from the other letter in Greek: an important man from Bar-Cochba's entourage, Ananos, passes on a command of his general who is mentioned by name. Again the case of a man who was not a professional clerk in an office but one of the leading personages close to Bar-Cochba who could write Greek himself. Another remarkable feature is that in the letter signed by mention is made of sending an intermediary called Agrippa, who must fetch wooden poles

very likely that he personally had a good command of Greek. In that event he could have used at will all three languages for his letters, judging from a statement in one of these Greek letters: ἐγράφη δ((ε)) ἐληνιστι δια τ((ο ὀρ))μαν μη εὐρηθ((η))ναι ἐβραεστι γ((ρα))-ψασθαι.<sup>1</sup> If the insertions here are correct, the meaning of this text is that the author of the letter did not feel like writing Hebrew at the moment and therefore wrote it in Greek. Consequently he could speak Greek just as well as Hebrew or Aramaic, but felt obliged to explain why he wrote in Greek instead of Hebrew or Aramaic, as usual. And so his statement is of particular importance for our subject, one which fully warrants the remark: "This confession is extremely noteworthy: the head of the nation knew Greek and used it in his correspondence",<sup>2</sup> and also this remark: "The hellenization of the Palestine Jews had gone further than the rabbinical texts suggested. Is a typical example required? Shimeon ben Cosiba, leader of the second Jewish revolt against Rome, who used the pre-exile Hebrew script on his coins, uses Greek to write to one of his lieutenants 'because he did not feel like writing in Hebrew' ".<sup>3</sup> Indeed only Hebrew is to be found on his coins. That is why it is all the more remarkable that this prince of Israel apparently spoke Greek and at times used it in letters which he sent to his subordinate officers.

Viewed in the light of these facts, the discovery of fragments of a Greek translation of the 12 minor prophets acquires greater significance. The earliest finds of this nature were made in August 1952 by "the indefatigable Ta'amré Bedouins", in "a new cave in the desert of Juda".<sup>4</sup> The sections found of this Greek text of the minor prophets were Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Zechariah. On the grounds of the manuscript these

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and lemons from Jonathan and Masabala as soon as possible so that Soumaios will have them in time for the Feast of the Tabernacles. Here the latter is indicated by a new word which is evidently a Hebraism and hence was probably coined by Jews who knew Greek: κίτρεαβόλη, *Aegyptus*, 1962, pp. 241, 245 et seq.

<sup>1</sup> B. Lifshitz, Beiträge zur Palästinischen Epigraphik, ZDPV 1962, p. 78. Here Lifshitz positively asserts: "... in einem der Briefe, der eigenhändig von Simon bar Kosiba geschrieben ist ..."

<sup>2</sup> B. Lifshitz, following immediately on the quotation of these words in Greek; cf. *Aegyptus* 1962, pp. 247, 254.

<sup>3</sup> D. Barthélemy in a note to an article in *Theologische Zeitschrift Basel*, Juli-August 1965, p. 368 <sup>39</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> D. Barthélemy, O.P., Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant de l'histoire de la Septante, R.B. 1953, pp. 18-29; the aforesaid quotation is on p. 19.



texts were dated towards the end of the first century A.D. They showed traces of frequent use, which accords well with the conjecture that these texts were also carried by Bar-Cochba's supporters to their last hiding place. The general opinion nowadays is that the vague indication "a new cave in the desert of Juda" used by Barthélemy really was the Cave of Horror and that Bedouins therefore brought these texts to Jordan from Israel, thus being "indefatigable" in their smuggling as well. To be precise, thirteen minute pieces of parchment were found in the Cave of Horror bearing fragments of a Greek translation of the minor prophets, namely Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Nahum and Zechariah. According to those who compared these fragments with the ones found by Bedouins in 1952 it is "clear beyond all doubt" that they belonged to the same scroll.<sup>1</sup> Hence if it can be established on the grounds of the writing on the small fragments of Hebrew-Aramaic papyri which Barthélemy says were found in the same cave and on the grounds of coins and dated documents found "in two other caves close by",<sup>2</sup> probably meaning the two openings of the Cave of Letters,<sup>3</sup> that all the said finds date from the time of Bar-Cochba, it is highly probable that Bar-Cochba's supporters frequently used this scroll before they fled to these caves and probably also during their sojourn in them. The people who sought their final refuge in these caves were very likely pious Jews for the most part. The great trouble they took to prepare themselves for the festivals and to conform to the law even under those circumstances is revealed in an Aramaic letter which mentions the transport of two asses which had to be sent to Jonathan and Masabala who were to load them "with loulav and ethrog" and send them to the camp of the man to whom the letter was addressed. "And you, from your place, send others who will bring you myrtle and willow branches. See to it that the tithes are given and send them to the camp".<sup>4</sup> The reference here is evidently to preparations for the Feast of the Tabernacles, and care was taken that the tithes were given in accordance with the law.

In view of the knowledge of Greek revealed in the letters issuing from Bar-Cochba's suite, not limited to just a few of his adherents but also possessed by the prince of Israel himself, it is definitely

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<sup>1</sup> Y. Aharoni in an article on Expedition B, IEJ, 1962, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> R.B. 1953, p. 19<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> IEJ 1961, p. 48; M.A. Beek in *Israël, Traditie en vernieuwing*, 1964, p. 31.

not necessary to assume that these fragments formed part of the text of a Greek translation of the minor prophets used exclusively by a few of Bar-Cochba's adherents who came from the Jewish diaspora. It could very well be that several of the Jews of Engedi who could read and understand the Greek letters they received from Bar-Cochba regularly read the minor prophets in a Greek version. And probably Barthélemy is right: "It is difficult not to see in this a tacit homage paid to the very widespread diffusion enjoyed at that time by the great Alexandrian translation, even as far as Palestine, the bulwark of orthodox Judaism".<sup>1</sup> The degree of piety with which the refugees treated this scroll containing part of the Holy Scriptures in Greek can be inferred from the fact that these fragments were preserved. The Cave of Horror was a comparatively small one, much smaller for instance than the Cave of Letters. It provided less opportunity for concealing all sorts of material from possible Roman penetrations. There are clear traces of a huge fire in which the refugees apparently burnt everything when they realised their cause was doomed to failure. They cast all their possessions into it, except this scroll of the minor prophets in Greek, which they concealed among the rocks at the back of the cave. They had no desire whatsoever to abandon it to the fire.<sup>2</sup>

Since the excavations carried out at Masada in the 1963-64 season it has been practically established that members of the Qumran sect also participated in the first Jewish revolt. The evidence is that a scroll was found at Masada containing the hymns of the Sabbath offering, which undoubtedly belong to the literature of this sect. This is indicated not only by the contents, style and terminology, but also by the dating of the sabbaths, based on the special calendar of the sect. This discovery is important for several reasons. For the first time a Qumran manuscript was found on a location relatively far removed from Qumran. Moreover this could enable a *terminus ante quem*, namely 73 A.D., to be established for a Qumran manuscript and hence for the sect.<sup>3</sup> Specifically

<sup>1</sup> R.B. 1953, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> IEJ 1962, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> IEJ 1965, pp. 105-108; it was already known from Josephus' work on the Jewish War that the Essenes also took part in the first revolt. He names Ἰωάννης ὁ Ἐσσαῖος as commander of NW Judea, B.J. II:567; III:11; for the dating of the inhabitation of Qumran, compare the article of Hans Bardtke, *Qumran und seine Funde*, Theol. Rundschau, Neue Folge, 1963, pp. 280-287.

in Masada has not a single trace been found of possessions of rebels from the time of Bar-Cochba, for example not a single coin from that period. But of course it is quite possible, and indeed quite probable since this find, that Essenes of Qumran also belonged to the rebels and, consequently, that some of the manuscripts in the aforesaid caves, perhaps also written in Greek like the scroll of the minor prophets, originally belonged to the sect or to individual members of it.

## CONCLUSIONS

The archeological finds made in the past century, especially those of the last few decades, are of very great significance for the knowledge of the language relationships in Palestine in the first century A.D. On the one hand they have confirmed that Aramaic was certainly also spoken and written in Palestine at that time and that it was and remained the naturally current language of communication in many circles. In actual fact this is seldom denied. But, on the other hand, these excavations have proved that this language definitely was not the only one spoken at that time. In the first place, I believe that it has been shown that Hebrew occupied a much more important place as normal written and probably also spoken language than has often been thought. Apparently it was not only the religious-official language, but was also used in ordinary letters, for example. In the second place, however,—and this is the subject we are most concerned with—it has clearly been shown that Greek was a language often used in Palestine in a period which lay very close to the first century A.D. and partially overlapped it.

And the enormous significance of the recent archeological material is, I believe, that it has cleared away all doubt about certain points and so has at least steered the discussion on all sorts of problems concerning long-established literary and archeological data in a given direction. The certainties now established sometimes tip the scales in weighing various possibilities, formerly all that could be attained. Diverse solutions hitherto plausible, and hence perforce left open, can no longer be upheld. Conversely what once were merely conjectures can now be termed certainties.

This even holds good for the comparison of the discoveries in the different caves around the Dead Sea. In themselves the finds of Greek manuscripts and documents in Qumran and Murabba'at could still perhaps be interpreted in diverse ways. In Murabba'at, for example, it was precisely various official records which were written in Greek. This in itself does not prove more than that the official bodies who drew them up used Greek; it does not necessarily prove that Greek was also the language spoken and written by the Jews who took these documents with them to the caves. A plausible

conjecture is that these Jews who had preserved these records so faithfully and apparently wished to do so for the coming period knew exactly what they contained, though they could also have been told this by the authorities concerned. The appendage of an Aramaic or Nabataean summary to certain documents in Greek which were found on Israeli soil proves that some of the parties to these transactions were not quite proficient in Greek, or at least that they wanted to have the exact terms agreed upon written down in black and white in a language they understood better. As long as no personal letter from Jew to Jew written in Greek had been found, it was possible to ascribe the use and knowledge of Greek in official documents entirely to the non-Jewish compilers of these contracts. And since no private correspondence between Jews in Greek was found in Murabba'at, the archeological data of those caves were open to diverging interpretations. But since the finds in the caves on Israeli soil have proved beyond all doubt not only that Jewish scribes composed records in Greek, but more particularly that letters in Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek were sent to the same Jewish leaders from the same Jewish centre, dealing with exactly the same sort of subjects, it is now definitely established that the knowledge and use of Greek was often quite a normal phenomenon in Jewish circles. Additionally the discovery of the archives of a Jewish family containing divers contracts in Greek has made it much more probable that the Jews concerned in these transactions were, on the whole, as well acquainted with Greek as the Jews who could correspond privately in Greek if they so desired.

Now it can of course be argued that these data pertain to only a restricted area and a very limited period. That is so, but the important thing is that they do refer to this area and this period. Here we are not concerned with data from the Jewish diaspora, but from the Jewish land itself. Besides, these very data prove that the Jews in Palestine definitely did not live in isolation, but certainly in the frontier areas maintained regular and sometimes intensive contact with non-Jews in adjacent regions. People from the Engedi area settled down on Nabataean territory, were apparently accepted as fellow citizens there as a matter of course, with the right to own property. That must have been possible in other parts of Palestine and not merely in this region. If one considers how closely the Jewish land was encircled at certain places by highly hellenised towns and regions, and in some parts

had been for centuries, then one may safely assume the language relationships in the area around the Dead Sea to be paradigmatic of many other parts of Palestine.

The time when these documents came into being is also important. The special feature of these data is that some of them can be dated very accurately. And then we have a period very close to the first century. Certain of them date from even before the revolt of Bar-Cochba. And since it is reasonable to assume that language relationships which, according to these documents, prevailed in this region in the time of Bar-Cochba and immediately prior to it did not suddenly arise but existed for many years, they may certainly be dated back to the end of the first century A.D. The question is whether these language relationships may be dated further back in time to the middle and the first half of the first century. The answer to this question depends partly on the degree of importance attached to the first Jewish revolt and to the devastation of Jerusalem, also in this respect. Above (p. 151) it appeared that some consider these events of great significance. Segert assumes that the devastation of Jerusalem was a milestone also with regard to language and that the hellenisation of the language made remarkable progress as from that moment.<sup>1</sup> Various other authors ascribe great importance to the events of 70 in the process of hellenisation. Sometimes, however, the conclusions are divergent. On the one hand it has been observed that after 70 Hebrew was replaced by Greek to an even greater degree,<sup>2</sup> and on the other that after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 and the rise of Christianity "the study of Greek was frowned upon on religious grounds".<sup>3</sup> These two opinions are not necessarily contradictory. The Roman authorities probably tried as far as possible to eradicate all traces of Jewry, including spiritual ones, after the bloody suppression of the revolt. The measures taken put an end to the part played by Jerusalem as centre of Jewry in Palestine and elsewhere. Romanisation implied hellenisation, and hence probably strong official promotion of the use of Greek as well. In that sense, the hellenisation of the language probably did indeed make remarkable progress. But one can hardly suppose that the Jews welcomed such an enforced hellenisation in the years after 70. On the contrary, there is more reason to assume

<sup>1</sup> Segert, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> Leon, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

that they resisted as far as possible the measures imposed upon them by the hated suppressors and that for many years after the revolt the Jews were suspicious of any special interest in the culture of the rulers—and hence often of hellenistic culture. The more the occupying power endeavoured to promote this culture, the greater must have been the inner resistance to it offered by the Jews.

That the hellenisation of the language was strongly promoted after 70 by the authorities is only to be expected, but one wonders whether this did not provoke particularly strong resistance from the Jews. It is significant that Greek disappeared entirely from the coinage during both revolts. And the Mishnah appears to contain statements which manifestly demonstrate that, during the periods of serious conflicts between Jews and Romans, special pronouncements were made about the study of Greek culture and the use of the Greek language.

Particularly with respect to the latter, the use of the Greek language, the significance of the year 70 should not be overestimated, neither regarding an enforced hellenisation nor an aversion to that language based on resistance to the measure of the suppressors.<sup>1</sup> The archeological data that were found in the caves around the Dead Sea are quite clear on the latter point. Greek was not permitted on the coinage in the period of Bar-Cochba's revolt, but it was still used in the letters sent by the leader of that revolt or by members of his staff. Evidently it had been so assimilated by Jewish circles and was so little felt to be the language of the hated enemy that its abolition from the correspondence between the leaders of the Jewish revolt was not taken into consideration. It is therefore all the more likely that a long-standing familiarity with this language in many Jewish circles resulted in its no longer being looked upon as the foreign language peculiar to the occupying forces, and so there was no urge to ban it radically as an expression of personal resistance to enforced hellenisation. Consequently in this respect the year 70 must not have signified a special breach. The attitude to Greek culture and its study must certainly have been influenced at times by intense national feelings. It is in this context that I believe the absence of Greek on the coinage should be placed. Indeed the use of that language on coins was always a token of the spiritual hellenisation of the Jewish princes who had

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 92<sup>1</sup>.

them minted. But the use of the Greek language was not, in itself, looked upon in that light. Otherwise the leaders of a Jewish revolt would have put a radical end to it.

If the year 70 does not mark a deep incision in the development of the use of Greek among the Jews of Palestine, then there is all the more reason to attach great weight to the material from the first century which dates from before 70. The natural assumption is then that the language relationships in the pre-70 period need not have differed so very much from those which have become better known since the discoveries made in the caves around the Dead Sea. It is then all the more feasible that the Greek inscription on the synagogue in Jerusalem, which almost certainly dates from before 70,<sup>1</sup> not only testifies to a knowledge of Greek in the circles of a single generation of priests and supervisors of the synagogue, but is also an indication that many Jews of Jerusalem in those days were quite familiar with Greek. And it is then even less surprising that very many Jews living in a region like that of Galilee could read and understand an imperial decree strictly forbidding tomb spoliation when it was written in Greek.<sup>2</sup> In Galilee in particular, which bordered on areas which had been hellenistic for centuries already, there must have been frequent contact between the inhabitants of those parts. And from the finds in the caves around the Dead Sea it manifestly appears that the population of the Jewish land in no way held themselves aloof from those adjacent regions, but mixed with them very freely and naturally.

Then, too, it is all the more likely that the Greek language used in the inscriptions on graves and ossuaries definitely does testify to a knowledge of that language in the Jewish families who had these inscriptions made. Naturally the one need not necessarily proceed from the other, and indeed that the inscriptions bear this out has often been contested. On the whole it is, of course, quite correct that "The spoken language of a people need not always conform with its written language. Hence one cannot always conclude from the language of the inscriptions from a given region or period that this language was spoken there or then".<sup>3</sup> Many have considered this rule particularly applicable to funerary inscriptions and have believed that the use of Greek in them in no

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 131-134.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 117-121.

<sup>3</sup> Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 173.



way proves that those who commissioned them knew that language, but only that they commissioned a craftsman proficient in that language to compose and engrave such an inscription. This has already been assumed by Nöldeke in his treatment of Mommsen's description of Roman rule and policy in the East. He believes that Mommsen goes too far in his description of the process of the hellenisation of Syria, for example, : "The hellenisation made great progress, but not in such a way that the Greek language or even really the Greek world of thought expanded to any considerable degree, rather in such a way that European technique and ways of living gained grounds, that certain occidental cultural elements began to exercise great influence on the thought and speech of cultured circles. In my opinion Mommsen paints too comprehensive a picture of the hellenisation of Syria and other Eastern countries. That the national language in Syria was entirely banished from cultural circles, that the position it acquired with respect to the Greek language was the same as the Celtic with respect to Latin in Gaul, is certainly exaggerated". True, according to Nöldeke, Greek was also used in Syria, but only in official documents. In his opinion funerary inscriptions reveal nothing about the true written or spoken language of the population: "It (the Aramaic language) had long since had to make way for Greek in official usage, but private documents were certainly still very often written in Aramaic. One should not attach too great value to the fact that in the Orient the honourable burgher gladly had an inscription made by the schoolmaster in the distinguished Greek language, of which he probably understood little on the whole. And what sort of Greek that often is!"<sup>1</sup>

It would be no small matter, I believe, if every schoolmaster in Syria, even in the rural areas, knew Greek. That also would imply a rather far-reaching hellenisation of the language. Did that schoolteacher learn Greek as part of his education? Did he become proficient in it through personal contacts in his town or village? That would imply a certain degree of dissemination of Greek. Besides: would a schoolmaster not have taken extra pains with the language on such a funerary inscription so that he would not be shamed before those who knew the language because of his bad

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<sup>1</sup> Th. Nöldeke, Ueber Mommsen's Darstellung der römischen Herrschaft und römischen Politik im Orient, in Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1885, pp. 331-351; aforesaid quotation p. 333.

Greek, and would not the family that was so desirous of having "a funerary inscription in the distinguished Greek language" not have firmly insisted that the same distinguished language was faultless in an inscription with which they wanted to show off?

This theory about engaging the services of a schoolmaster is not particularly plausible in my opinion. And its plausibility has not been enhanced by the archeological data that have come to light since Nöldeke wrote his article in 1885. Nevertheless Alon put forward this hypothesis once more in his evaluation of the significance of the numerous Greek funerary inscriptions in Jaffa and Beth Shearim. He even refers to Nöldeke's article in a quotation. He likewise is of the opinion that the Greek of these inscriptions does not prove that it was also the language of the deceased's relatives. Those relatives could have asked 'formulators' to produce the standard expressions in Greek which they wished to have on the graves. That Greek, therefore, proves nothing about the vernacular of these people.<sup>1</sup> This variant of Nöldeke's theory is equally unsatisfactory. It has rightly been objected that the implication would then be "that the Jews to whom these inscriptions referred had lost their national characteristics and were fully assimilated, though their language remained barbarian".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that the numerous people who had these Greek funerary inscriptions made only did so because they thought Greek looked so distinguished. That would mean that they must have been more or less sympathetic towards hellenistic culture. If so, why should they not learn Greek themselves?

Moreover the often very poor Greek, which was observed already by Nöldeke but which is also very obvious in the numerous Greek funerary inscriptions of Jaffa and Beth Shearim, does not support the theory of craftsmen being commissioned by the relatives who themselves were entirely ignorant of the language so much as the formulation of that Greek by the relatives themselves, who had some command of the language. Some of these inscriptions were probably made by members of the family. Many of them are executed technically in such a clumsy and primitive manner that they could easily have been made by persons not skilled in this

<sup>1</sup> Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 90<sup>II</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> B. Lifshitz, ZDPV, June 1962, p. 76 (=Aegyptus, 1962, p. 255); cf. id. L'hellénisation des Juifs de Palestine à propos des inscriptions de Besara (Beth-Shearim), R.B. 1965, pp. 520-538.

craft. Some families probably commissioned others to do this work, but if they could afford little expense and the work had to be carried out as cheaply as possible, then the persons employed would certainly have been unable to correct the Greek in the text ordered or to formulate it faultlessly themselves.

If this is correct, the simultaneous occurrence of tidy, correct and clumsy, primitive inscriptions in Greek proves that this language was used in widely divergent layers of the Jewish population in Palestine. In any case it was not restricted to the upper classes. Nonetheless many scholars believe sharp distinctions can be made. Black, for example, postulates that four languages were used in Palestine of the first century A.D. "Greek was the speech of the educated 'hellenized' classes and the medium of the cultural and commercial intercourse between Jew and foreigner; Latin was the language of the army of occupation. . . ; Hebrew, the sacred tongue of the Jewish scriptures, continued to provide the lettered Jew with an important means of literary expression and was cultivated as a spoken tongue in the learned coteries of the Rabbis; Aramaic was the language of the people of the land and, together with Hebrew, provided the chief literary medium of the Palestine Jew of the first century".<sup>1</sup> I shall not discuss the question whether the characterisation of the role of Hebrew can still be upheld now that the archeological data from the caves around the Dead Sea have been made known. It was made clear above that this question must now be reassessed in any case. But so must also the limitation of the use of Greek and of Aramaic as formulated by Black. Can it still be maintained that Greek was the language of the cultured classes and of commercial intercourse? It has almost always been conceded that in Palestine Greek was used in the upper classes and in trade and communications, but then limited to these spheres. "The Jews in Palestine learned Greek as the language of trade and intercourse in so far as they required it, the cultured made themselves acquainted with Greek literature, but retained their mother tongue".<sup>2</sup> "We can presume that in Jerusalem many Jews met who had received a more Greek than Hebrew education. . . In the leading families, for example that of Rabban Gamliel II, the knowledge of Greek language

<sup>1</sup> M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 1967, pp. 15 et seq.; 47-49.

<sup>2</sup> A. Thumb, *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus*, 1901, p. 105; cf. F. Schulthess, *Das Problem der Sprache Jesu*, 1917, pp. 25, 27.

was current".<sup>1</sup> "... in Palestine ... Greek was understood and was used in trade and business. ...".<sup>2</sup> "The language of business administration and fashion was Greek".<sup>3</sup> Alon's view is that the people who learned Greek in Palestine generally did so for the sake of international relationships (leaders of communities, persons who entertained relations with the rulers) and to further trading contacts. Greek was also spoken by those charged with administrative affairs in the towns and other occupied territories and by the financial staff of the "imperial house".<sup>4</sup>

If one believes that Greek was spoken especially by the upper layers of society, one will naturally assume that the lower layers knew little or nothing of that language.<sup>5</sup> Moreover one will then be inclined to draw a sharp distinction in this matter between town and country. Some cultured city-dwellers perhaps knew good Greek, but, according to this hypothesis, the simple rural population knew nothing at all of it. There in the country only the language of the land was spoken.<sup>6</sup>

The last part of the quotation referred to above shows how important this point is for our subject. If it were indeed certain that the villages, the farmers who lived in the rural areas of Palestine, were absolutely untouched by Hellenism, then it must be assumed that Jesus, his family and his apostles knew only Aramaic and were completely ignorant of Greek. Now there is not a single doubt about the former. It is conceivable that Aramaic (in addition to Hebrew?) was in practice the language spoken and understood in the far-off villages and hamlets which had little contact with the rest of the world. The question is whether there were many of such completely isolated regions and villages in Palestine in those days. It should not be forgotten that the inhabitants everywhere came

<sup>1</sup> J. Bonsirven, S.J., *Le Judaïsme Palestinien au temps de Jésus-Christ*, 1934, pp. 37 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*, 1962, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 30; cf. pp. 28, 34, 47.

<sup>4</sup> Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 93<sup>II</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., for example, Schürer, *op. cit.* II, pp. 84 et seq.; Hadas, *op. cit.*, p. 28: "Even those who were hellenised had to use the vernacular in their contacts with their less enlightened fellow-countrymen".

<sup>6</sup> Cf. R.G.G.<sup>3</sup> V, p. 24; Black, *op. cit.*, p. 15: "Aramaic was the language of the people of the land"; F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine*, Tome I, 1952, p. 110: "les idiomes nationaux se perpétuaient dans les villages et à l'intérieur des familles habitants la ville"; Zahn, *Einleitung* I, pp. 24 et seq.; Alon, *op. cit.*, pp. 93<sup>II</sup> et seq.

into contact more or less frequently with government officials. In order to understand legal regulations pertaining to contracts, taxes, census, a knowledge of Greek was necessary, or in any case expedient. Moreover at fixed times Jews from the diaspora could be met on pilgrimage throughout the land, and in many parts people from the border regions of the surrounding highly-hellenised countries could be met often and perhaps even daily.

The funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim prove very clearly that there were many contacts with Jews in the diaspora. But the Greek in them was certainly not the product of educated Jews of the diaspora only. In many funerary inscriptions no mention is made of where the deceased came from. That was not necessary if he had lived in either Beth Shearim or its vicinity. The family that regularly visited such a grave had no need of any specification of this nature. Hence we can be sure that the majority of the funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim, including those in Greek, were drawn up or commissioned by Jews from that town or its vicinity. The name of a village from the surrounding country is mentioned in a couple of the inscriptions: Araba and Baka in Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Of course this need not mean that the farmers in such villages were influenced by hellenistic culture, but it is evident from them that a radical distinction as regards the knowledge of Greek should not be drawn between urban and rural areas. There were people in the villages who were more or less acquainted with Greek. That was not a correct literary and grammatic Greek. The often clumsy use of this language in the funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim could indicate that many simple peasants from that place and the surrounding countryside took part in the composition of these inscriptions. "Phonetical and grammatical vulgarisms are to be met with practically everywhere. But this very phenomenon testifies to the use of Greek among a vast number of inhabitants from the market places and villages as well, and hence not merely among the city-dwellers and cultured people . . . The epigraphic material from Besara reveals the historical phenomenon of the hellenisation of the Palestinian Jews, the testimonial of the inscriptions of this vast necropolis is clear and precise".<sup>2</sup> Indeed on this point sharp distinction can no longer be made between upper and lower classes, between city- and country-dwellers, and certainly not as regards a knowledge of Greek. No

<sup>1</sup> CIJ II, Nos. 1098, 1100.

<sup>2</sup> B. Lifshitz, ZDPV, June 1962, pp. 77 et seq.; id., R.B. 1965, p. 523.

matter how very superficial and sketchy that knowledge was, many from all layers of society understood it and were able to speak and write it.

Now validity as testimonial of the language relationships in the first century A.D. cannot be ascribed unconditionally to the archeological data from the graves of Beth Shearim. What was normal in that region in the second to fourth centuries need not also obtain for the first century. Hence it is important that the conclusions drawn from the funerary inscriptions of Beth Shearim can be checked against data from an intermediary period. The latter material likewise reveals that the Jews did not live in complete isolation in the Jewish land, but maintained busy communications with neighbouring regions across the frontiers. We may therefore safely conclude that this was at least equally so in Galilee and that the influence of intercourse with the inhabitants of the adjacent, sometimes strongly hellenised regions was even greater there than in the vicinity of Engedi. It also appears from certain documents from the caves around the Dead Sea that they were once the property of people who belonged entirely to rural society. Contracts pertaining to the ownership of date palm groves, letters mentioning divers sorts of fruit, consignments of wood, asses to transport them, all these are primarily indications of pastoral surroundings. Evidently the Greek language was also used in rural circles where perhaps not a trace of Greek literature and culture was to be found.

Now if the data from Beth Shearim and the caves around the Dead Sea confirm that these language relationships existed for centuries and in various parts of the Jewish land, there are grounds for back-dating them a little further and for considering them valid for other parts of the Jewish country. They are further confirmed for a slightly earlier period by what Josephus says of his and his fellow countrymen's knowledge of languages in the passage at the end of his *Antiquities*, explained above in Chapter Ic.<sup>1</sup> It appeared from this passage not only that Josephus had acquired a thorough knowledge of Greek by means of great diligence and exertion, but also that every freeman, indeed every slave,

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<sup>1</sup> See above pp. 65 et seq.; cf. A. Meyer, *Jesu Muttersprache*, 1896, pp. 61 et seq.; M. Friedländer, *Les Esséniens*, *Revue des études juives*, 1887, pp. 187 et seq.; A. Schlatter, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht des Josefus*, 1932, p. 233; Zahn, *Einl. I*, p. 44.

could achieve much regarding the knowledge of that language, even its style and pronunciation, if he had a mind to do so. True, Josephus admits that his people did not hold such a special care for a thorough knowledge of foreign tongues in high esteem, because only those "who have an exact knowledge of the Law and who are capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures" were greatly admired. But the very disdain for such as a too common occupation demonstrates how the possibility of acquiring a respectable knowledge of Greek was open to many. Josephus' statement proves that a certain amount of knowledge of Greek was widespread among all layers of the population in his day. A thorough knowledge of the language and the ability to speak and write it faultlessly required a great deal of application, but anyone who really wanted to could gain such, since practically everyone already knew something of the language. Hence Josephus' statement concords exactly with what we now know more concretely from archeological data, and since it is earlier by a few decades than the documents from Bar-Cochba's entourage, it may also be accounted a clear indication that the year 70 did not mark a turning point in this respect and that the language relationships as we know them from a slightly later archeological data were already in existence in the Jewish land even before 70.

The statement of Origen must be viewed in this light: οὐ πάνυ μὲν Ἰουδαῖοι τὰ Ἑλλήνων φιλολογοῦσι.<sup>1</sup> Alon considers this a very important testimonial coming as it does from a man who lived in Israel at the end of the period of the Tannaim and who knew the Jews of Palestine and their scholars.<sup>2</sup> Indeed it is important as the information of a man qualified to judge the state of affairs at the beginning of the third century. Good note should be taken, however, of the context in which Origen writes these words. Celsus produces a Jew who evidently knows a remark of Bacchus which occurs in the *Bacchae* of Euripides. Origen retorts immediately: Jews have absolutely no knowledge of Greek literature.<sup>3</sup> As a rule they do not study it seriously. From what Origen says immediately following this, it appears that he admitted the possibility of an odd Jew being so well read. But it can be inferred from Origen's remark that he

<sup>1</sup> *Contra Celsum* II: 34.

<sup>2</sup> Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 93<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The translation given in Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, 1953, p. 94, runs as follows: "Jews are not at all well read in Greek literature".

considered an acquaintance *with Greek literature* a rare thing among the Jews. Of course this does not mean that he denied the Jews of Palestine in his day all knowledge of the Greek language.<sup>1</sup> For that matter, Alon only quotes this passage to demonstrate that even learned Jews in Palestine were not familiar with Greek literature, for he points out to the contrary that Origen frequently quoted the Greek he heard from Jewish acquaintances in Caesarea when explaining Bible texts and in this language talks and discussions were held with learned Jews.<sup>2</sup> This further confirms that many Jews, here primarily in Caesarea, had a good command of Greek.

So divers literary and archeological data from different centuries agree in their testimonial to a knowledge of Greek in broad layers of the Jewish population in Palestine. And they contain not a single manifest indication that this was lacking during certain periods in the first three centuries A.D. These data also prove that in this matter the dividing line between the Jews of Palestine and those in the diaspora cannot be drawn so very precisely. The Jews from outside Palestine no doubt came more frequently and more intensively into contact with various expressions of Hellenistic culture than those in the Jewish land. When they lived as a minority in the midst of a heathen people, the former were practically forced to learn to speak and write Greek, whether they wanted to or not. But it should not be forgotten that in Palestine contacts with non-Jews as well as Jews were numerous. It was not only the hordes of Jewish pilgrims who made it necessary or at least expedient for many to speak Greek, there were also large numbers of non-Jews who visited Palestine as government officials, traders and travellers passing through the country. From the known data it can be deduced that the Jews in Palestine made no great objections to this. On the contrary, Greek was spoken and written as a matter of course in times when hostility towards non-Jews must have been very rife in the Jewish land. And in times of peace the frontiers between the Jewish and non-Jewish land appear to have fluctuated greatly in this respect. There were recurrent contacts with the inhabitants of adjacent parts of the neighbouring country, there was social intercourse, and the Jews of the Jewish land did not hesitate to settle down temporarily or permanently in non-Jewish country. Often they were accepted as fellow-citizens as a matter of course.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. B. Lifshitz, ZDPV, June 1962, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Alon, *op. cit.*, p. 93<sup>1</sup>, note 36.



Therefore it is not surprising that Greek documents are encountered on the Palestine side of such frontiers, that Bible texts in Greek are also to be found there, that inscriptions on graves and synagogues there are often written in Greek, that regarding the use of Greek among the Jews there was at most a gradated difference between the diaspora and Jewish Palestine, but certainly not a radical contrast.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously what applies in general to the Jews of Palestine in the first century A.D. also applies to their Jewish-Christian compatriots. There are even grounds for assuming that the latter were on the whole in a better position to hear and speak Greek. Right from the beginning the preaching of the Gospel was not confined to the Jewish land and was directed to non-Jews as well as Jews. At a very early stage the Jewish Christians in Palestine probably came into contact with non-Jews from beyond the frontiers of Palestine as well as Jews from the diaspora. That is why the Jewish Christians of Palestine must often have had special occasion to acquire a good knowledge of Greek. Frequently they must have had to speak it in order to maintain regular contact with all the other members of the congregation. From what has been said above, they evidently had little difficulty in doing so, and therefore the obvious assumption is that they often had a better knowledge of Greek than their Jewish compatriots on the whole, since they belonged to a Christian congregation.<sup>2</sup>

Now that it has been established mainly on the grounds of archeological data that all layers of the Jewish population of Palestine in the first centuries A.D. were more or less acquainted

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. A.D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background*, 1964, p. X et seq.; Morton Smith, *Palestine Judaism in the first Century*, in Moshe Davis, *Israel: Its Role in Civilisation*, 1956, pp. 68 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Hahn also realises that the question as to how far Palestine Jewry voluntarily admitted the influence of Hellenism cannot readily be answered. His conclusion is, however: "Mehr als die Unterscheidung des palästinischen Urchristentums, das im hebräisch-aramäischen Sprachbereich erwachsen ist, und eines frühen hellenistischen Judenchristentums, dem, bei aller Bindung an überkommene Tradition Sprache und Denken des Hellenismus vertraut gewesen ist, wird sich vorläufig nicht erreichen lassen", Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel*, 31966, pp. 11 et seq. Even this contradiction can no longer be maintained absolutely, as far as the language is concerned, cf., for example, B. Lifshitz, R.B. 1965, p. 533: "Il est évident que les auteurs des inscriptions de Besara, comme d'ailleurs de celles des autres villes avaient appris le grec dans le contact quotidien avec les Grecs et les Orientaux hellénisés".

with Greek, there is absolutely no reason for rejecting any possibility that Jesus sometimes spoke Greek, e.g. when He preached in the Decapolis or in Trans-Jordan (Matth. 4:25; Mark 3:8; 5:20; 7:31; 10:1) or when He spoke with Pilate, or that the earliest apostles and later Jewish leaders of congregations, such as James brother of the Lord, could speak as well as understand Greek in their intercourse with fellow Christians.<sup>1</sup> It is no longer possible to refute such a possibility by recalling that these were usually people of modest origins. It has now been clearly demonstrated that a knowledge of Greek was in no way restricted to the upper circles, which were permeated with Hellenistic culture, but was to be found in all circles of Jewish society, and certainly in places bordering on regions where much Greek was spoken, e.g. Galilee.

Could the Jewish Christians of Palestine, however, write as well as speak Greek? Could James have written an epistle like the one preserved in the New Testament? We have seen that certain scholars believe that only a negative answer can be given to this question, since the author of the epistle would then have been the son of a Nazarene carpenter, 'a Jew in Palestine', 'a countryman of Galilee'.<sup>2</sup>

Now that much new material has been made available, such questions cannot be answered in this simple way. For example it is now known to be a fact that many Jews in the Jewish land as well as in the diaspora were capable of writing a letter in Greek. It is evident from not only the archeological data but also scattered

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Diez Macho, *La lengua hablada por Jesucristo*, *Oriens Antiquus*, Vol. II, 1963, pp. 95-132; p. 131, conclusion no. 8: "The discoveries of recent years prove the deep penetration of Greek in Palestine, both in the north and the south. Nothing whatsoever stands in the way of assuming that the apostles spoke Greek and that Jesus himself used this language on a few occasions." Macho also draws attention to the great significance of what are probably ancient Jewish-Christian inscriptions found under the basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, in the graveyard beside the church "Dominus fleuit" on the Mount of Olives and in the excavations in Talpioth, many of which are written in Greek, as is the case of similarly worded Jewish inscriptions, pp. 127 et seq.; cf. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 31919, pp. 28 et seq.; A. W. Argyle, "Hypocrites" and the Aramaic theory, in the *Expository Times*, Vol. 75, 1963/64, pp. 113 et seq.; R.O.P. Taylor, *Did Jesus speak Aramaic?*, *The Expository Times*, Vol. 56, 1944/45, pp. 95-97; id., *The Groundwork of the Gospels*, 1946, pp. 91-105; J. P. Mahaffy, *The Progress of Hellenism in Alexander's Empire*, 1905, pp. 128 et seq.; B. M. Metzger, *The New Testament, its background, growth and content*, 1965, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> See above pp. 9 et seq.

statements of Josephus that a certain basic knowledge of Greek may be assumed among many Jews of Palestine, sufficient to enable them to speak the language and, moreover, compose funerary inscriptions and ordinary private letters dealing with various subjects.

The question is whether this also implies that Jews from all levels of the Palestinian population could compose epistles in more or less good literary Greek, such as is claimed for some in the New Testament, containing all the literary ingredients found, for example, in the Epistle of James. It is known from the writings of Josephus that anyone who wanted to become more proficient particularly in writing good Greek had the opportunity to do so in certain circles and, if he so desired, could find people to assist him in composing written works.<sup>1</sup> This surely also held good for those who shared the leadership of important Jewish-Christian congregations in Palestine and who very early on came into frequent contact with Christians of the diaspora, either Jews or heathens in origin.

Now we have seen that a few special features of the Epistle of James make it difficult to conceive just how assistants could have helped to compose and write the letter in practice.<sup>2</sup> Hence the question to be considered is rather whether it was possible that James, brother of the Lord, (assuming he really was the author) personally had as much knowledge of Greek and had become quite familiar with its idiom. The example of Josephus proves, in my opinion, that this must not be deemed impossible. Josephus had his own special reasons for going to a great deal of trouble to learn to write good Greek; authors of epistles in the New Testament could also have had their own reasons, including this one in the first place: it meant a great deal to them that the special message, which they believed they had, should be disseminated in as wide a circle as possible. They probably could count on the assistance of many in this respect, and hence too on the opportunity of becoming more familiar with a language they could already understand and speak. Even though absolute certainty cannot be attained on this point, in view of all the data made available in the past decades the possibility can no longer be precluded that a Palestinian Jewish Christian of the first century A.D. wrote an epistle in good Greek.

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<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 74 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 10 et seq.

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